#PRDIVERSITY:
THE STRUGGLE IS REAL.
MEETING BUSINESS OBJECTIVES
WITH A 2020 MINDSET

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BIC | **THE HOLMES REPORT**
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"Talent is universal; opportunity is not."
Rye Barcott

Executive Summary

Among 16 CEOs and two former ones of global PR firms interviewed for this paper, there is widespread agreement about the need for greater Diversity and Inclusion in the industry. Attracting more people of color to the entry and senior level ranks is a priority followed by gender, particularly including more women in the senior ranks. Most are in agreement that diversity and inclusion is a business imperative tied to meeting client expectations for more diversity on their accounts in order to reflect the changing demographics of their multicultural market and to fuel creativity and diversity of thought in their campaigns.

Beyond that, there are differences in the way CEOs define Diversity and Inclusion, their levels of personal involvement, and their approaches to the problem. Most do not appear to regard it a top priority, with few sharing any metrics they may have put in place. Some, however, have embraced D & I considerations in hiring decisions, have invested in programs to promote inclusion as well as diversity in hiring, and have put their agencies' money on the line. A couple of them say that they "live" this.

Their thinking about hiring is far from uniform. Some go so far as to say that they do give preferences to underrepresented groups. Some say that they would find this risky to do for more senior positions. Some acknowledge that numerical goals are a baseline; others find numerical goals to be unhelpful; and others find them insufficient to ensuring an inclusive environment.

Many recognize that hiring of diverse candidates does not guarantee retention without inclusionary efforts. A number of firms have embarked on efforts to support retention. The most common effort of this sort, instituted by over half of the firms, is implicit bias training within their firms. Other practices adopted by some firms that could serve as role models for others include onboarding training, establishing and listening to affinity

groups, formal mentoring and training, goal-setting, assigning responsibility to high-level decision-makers, and possibly tying diversity goals to compensation The interviews suggest that measuring the degree of diversity in organizations, sharing this information, establishing standard definitions of D & I, and expanding the pool of undergraduate and graduate programs for recruiting new hires are other ways in which the firms' D&I goals could be enabled. Working group initiatives such as The World in 2020: *The Diversity and Inclusion Project* at **The City College of New York** (CCNY) would also help. CEOs interviewed expressed strong aspirations for greater D & I in the industry by 2020.

It is commendable that PR firm CEOs are highly aware of this issue, took the time to talk with me, and are taking the issue very seriously in many cases. As we approach 2020 and as the country's diversity increases, it will be increasingly important for CEOs to learn from each other about the best practices that others have adopted, because they know that their continued relevance depends on successfully hiring, retaining, and listening to all segments of the population while meeting the business objectives of their agency, their holding company, and their clients.

BACKGROUND

"Diversity and Inclusion" (D&I) is a catch-all phrase often heard in business and policy discussions in the U.S. It is meant to encompass gender, race, ethnicity and, to some, those with disabilities and non-traditional gender or sexual orientation, reflective of our societal values. Though there have been periodic discussions of D&I in the public relations industry, the goal of diversity and inclusion in the industry is far from being realized – or even well defined.

Traditionally, the industry has been made up of white men and women from affluent backgrounds, with white men holding the most senior level positions. During the past 20 years, the industry has kept pace with globalization, innovation and technological advances. Agencies have been busy supporting the efforts of their clients as they expanded into new global markets and exported their cultures and the cultures of their home countries. Little focus was placed on diversity or inclusion within their U.S. ranks as positions were being filled to meet client demands.

One could argue that D&I was not high on corporate America's priority list until U.S. President Barack Obama made it so in 2011 requiring the largest employer, the federal government, to actively hire diverse candidates. Suddenly, D&I became a business imperative—for good reason. Affirmative action was derived from the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws from the 1960s ensuring that people of underrepresented groups had full opportunities for employment. Today, the push for D&I by clients as a moral imperative and best business practice requires agencies to become more reflective of a diverse and inclusive workforce

By 2055, the U.S. will not have a single racial or ethnic majority. Over the next five decades, the majority of U.S, population growth is projected to be linked to Asian and Latin American immigration. [1] "One in seven U.S. infants (14%) were multiracial or multiethnic in 2015, nearly triple the share in 1980." [2] U.S. Census Bureau projects that African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Native-Americans will have a spending power of $3.6 trillion by 2020. [3]

Given these statistics, it comes as no surprise that D&I has become a major RFP criterion. Clients, particularly procurement officers at Fortune 100 companies, are demanding that their agencies have more diversity on their teams. Winning new

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[1] Pew Research Center, March 31, 2016 10 Demographic trends that are shaping the U.S. and the World.
[2] Pew Research Center, June 6, 2017 The Rise of multiracial and multiethnic babies in the U.S.
[3] US Census Bureau
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf

assignments is no longer driven solely by referrals and closed-door connections. Achieving D&I in the workplace is no longer aspirational but it is intrinsically tied to business objectives, such as reaching multicultural audiences, and defining brand identity through cultural competency and diversity of thought and ideas.

The public relations industry knows that it has a diversity and inclusion problem. Seventy percent of those employed in the public relations industry are women, while only 30% of agency executives are female.[4] The Bureau of Labor Statistics cites a similar statistic and reports the ethnic makeup of the PR industry as 10.3% African American, 5.4% Asian-American and 3.3% Hispanic-American.[5] The Holmes Report has commissioned research that shows a significant pay gap — and engagement gap — for women and people of color within the industry that will be released in August.

This paper will explore the views of PR agency CEOs on D&I and the ways their agencies are responding to this timely challenges. In particular it will cover:

- Their views on the need for D&I
- Their levels of involvement in the issue
- The potential obstacles to D&I objectives
- Their approaches to D&I
- The practices that they have adopted to advance D&I goals.

The paper is based on interviews with CEOs from some of the largest PR agencies in the country, all of whom agreed to be quoted for publication. In general, there appears to be consensus about the existence of a problem, but not about how to define it or solve it. Most companies have taken steps to address the issue, but it is too early at this point to determine how effective those steps have been. Nonetheless, the information they shared in the course of these interviews should help all PR agencies to understand the direction of the industry and to formulate D&I strategies for their agencies.

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[4] Holmes Report, April 2015.
https://www.holmesreport.com/long-reads/article/why-aren't-there-more-female-ceos-in-pr
[5] Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016. https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm

METHODOLOGY

In collaboration with the Holmes Report, this research paper will explore the role of CEO leadership in diversity and inclusion and the perspectives of agency CEOs on D&I within the industry. It is based on the author's recorded qualitative in-depth interviews with 16 CEOs and two former CEOs of the top 65 public relations agencies ranked by The Holmes Report [6]about this subject, conducted between October, 2016 and July, 2017. [7] A series of twenty questions were asked of the respondents (See Appendices for the list of participants and the questions they were asked). Most of the interviews were conducted in-person without a third party in their respective New York offices and/or at The Holmes Report PRvoke16 summit in Miami last year. The remaining interviews were conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and stored in a secure cloud storage service. The research was subject to Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval by The City College of New York (CCNY).

CCNY Branding + Integrated Communication & The Holmes Report | May 3, 2017

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[6] Holmes Report Ranking 2017.
[7] Hill +Knowlton, Text 100, Cohn & Wolfe and MSL Group were unavailable for the interviews.

THE NEED FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

There is widespread agreement among the interviewed CEOs about the importance of their agencies' D&I to their business success. The ability to connect, serve and understand their multicultural consumers is dependent on their ability to relate, compete and survive.

As Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga remarked at Davos earlier this year: "Real Diversity is not just about gender, race, ethnicity or orientation. Real diversity is diversity of background and experience. If you come from the same backgrounds, you'll have the same blind spots and miss the same trends." This is certainly true today, as shown by recent missteps of brands such as PepsiCo's police brutality commercial, Nivea's Pure White campaign, United Airlines' mishandling of a passenger on an overbooked aircraft, and Uber's sexist culture.

The same applies to innovation within an organization. The lack of diversity can inhibit innovation when people of diverse thinking, backgrounds and skill sets are NOT at the table. This is particularly the case in creative fields like PR. In a recent survey of 500 professionals in creative fields, more than half of respondents say they work in a creative echo chamber in which unconscious bias and homogeneity of thought stifles originality.[8]

Most of the CEOs confirmed that diversity and inclusion are tied to their business outcomes and overall strategy (with one, Grayling, stating "not as much as it should be.") As Stuart Smith, Global CEO of Ogilvy Public Relations, pointed out, "Diversity and inclusion is good for our people, good for our clients and good for our business. Period. We need to have people in the organization, leading accounts and leading the business, who are representative of clients and representative of the audiences they are trying to reach."

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[8] Fast Company and Ketchum Collaboration to Explore unconscious bias and insularity in the Creative Ranks, Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, 2017.

To meet client expectations, agencies understand the need to present them with diversity of thought.

- "In the market [where] we operate," said Matt Neale, CEO of Golin, "we need a pool of talent that can bring insights to every walk of life and in the United States —that's the people that live on the coasts, the people that live in the middle. That's people from all different ethnicities, ages and beliefs. . . it means we need people who are effective in the fields in which we're working to inform the decisions that we make."

- Richard Edelman, president and CEO of Edelman, said, "This is completely integral to our ability to solve problems for clients. Because we need the creative push, we need the experience and we also need the global background on this diverse force."

- Mike Fernandez, US CEO of Burson-Marsteller, cites the advantages of a diverse staff in the quality of the agency's work: "We know lots of research that [shows] when we are more inclusive and have more diverse thoughts —it is often beneficial to the end product, service or communication, or in the innovation or creation of some new product or service."

- "Diversity of talent is a very, very big issue," according to Smith, Ogilvy Public Relations. "I don't just need people who are ex-journalists in PR, I also need people who are videographers. I need people who by faith understand communications. I need a huge diversity of talent— that means I need people from all walks of life."

- As Andy Polansky, CEO of Weber Shandwick, put it, "Most of my energy is spent on talent — retaining talent, recruiting talent, creating a work environment and an inclusive atmosphere from a D&I standpoint. It's all about creating teams who bring a different point of view because that's how we're going to bring our clients the best solutions to the problems and challenges they face."

DEFINING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As the above comments suggest, however, there is little agreement on the definition of diversity and inclusion, with some CEOs focused more on gender, others on ethnicity, and others on prior professional experience or on economic backgrounds. One quarter of the respondents defined diversity to specifically include gender equality while nine of the remaining respondents defined it to include race and ethnicity.

D&I refers specifically to addressing underrepresented people in the U.S. workplace. As Peter Harris, U.S. CEO of Grayling put it, "If you look around at who's running the agencies, myself included, it's white men. As an industry, it has improved but we're not there yet." Most of the CEOs defined hiring more people of color as their top priority, and hiring more women in senior executive positions as a close second. Nan Williams, Group Chief Executive, Four Communications, said: "We're trying to get more men into our business. But at the top level it's very well balanced. We just don't have an issue with that." Barbara Bates, CEO of Hotwire says, "We're strong in some areas for example we're proud that our leadership team is 75% female and our global leadership team is 60% female with a female CEO and COO, which is actually quite unusual in our industry."

Heidi Hovland, CEO DeVries Global, is still not completely satisfied with the industry's progress with gender balance in the C-suite: "As an industry that is so heavily female, why do we have so few female CEOs? That's a million-dollar question and I don't have the answer. But something isn't working as it should."

Though she lamented the lack of female CEOs, Hovland, stated, "Gender diversity, I would say, is a much bigger problem in other places. Racial diversity is our biggest problem and is the hardest nut to crack."

Others agree with Hovland that the industry has been less successful in diversifying its workforce with respect to race and ethnicity, and so have focused their concerns on this aspect of D&I:

- As M Booth CEO Dale Bornstein put it, "Our teams have focused on people of color as the primary kind of diversity they want to focus on. We do a good job on diversity in other ways whether it's sexual orientation, gender, religion, but they really want to focus on people of color, and the truth is, we are trying but we have a long way to go — especially in the senior ranks. "

- Don Baer, worldwide Chair and CEO, Burson-Marsteller affirmed that "D&I is a major priority for me and for the firm, especially in the United States…where we have particular challenges, just as the entire industry does with racial and ethnic diversity."

- Williams, Four Communications: "Where we do have an issue would be ethnic backgrounds. There are not many senior people. Certainly I would say that employees with a disability are very rare in our business."

Others defined diversity more broadly, with some thinking that focusing on race and diversity is not sufficient. Some examples:

- Neale, Golin: "Diversity for me, most importantly, is having people with different points of view, and the important piece for me is coming from different origins. I'm truly talking about [people] who grew up in poverty, people who are immigrants from other countries. I define diversity as ethnic, social and economic."

- Rob Flaherty, Chairman and CEO, Ketchum: (Diversity is) "people from different backgrounds, people from different creative fields."

- John Saunders, CEO, Fleishman Hillard says that diversity is an environment that is open, encouraging and supportive of all forms of diversity. "If you use its widest interpretation, surely it would be people who have a physical disability or an intellectual challenge, special needs."

- Brad MacAfee, CEO, Porter Novelli: "Diversity at its broadest brings a mix of everything such as gender, race, ethnicity -- all the traditional dimensions; but it's much broader. It should include diversity of thought, experience and even socioeconomics. Ultimately, we should embrace a philosophy that recognizes when you bring differences together, you can actually come up with something that's breakthrough."

THE INCLUSION PART OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

While the interviewed CEOs spent some time defining diversity, very few addressed inclusion specifically. Many defined inclusive as "understanding and respecting one another." Those who did mention it recognized that hiring a diverse staff would not guarantee a sense of inclusion among those hired:

- MacAfee, Porter Novelli: "First, is the culture ready? There are a few things I mean by that. One, can we truly get back to representation? What does your talent mix look like in your organization? Second,…just because you have a mix of talent doesn't necessarily mean your environment is diverse and inclusive."

- Echoing this viewpoint, Polansky, Weber Shandwick, said: "People often focus on the need to build diverse teams and how integral that is to the fabric of an organization. But people don't spend enough time thinking about inclusion. Even when companies are successful in bringing great diverse talent into an organization, they don't take proper care in creating an inclusive environment."

- Similarly, Lynn Casey, CEO Padilla said, "Inclusivity is where the rubber meets the road, not only checking the box and getting X people of color but also making them feel welcome and making sure we understand and celebrate each other. Our differences are all going to rub off on each other."

- **Edelman, Edelman:** "That's tragic. I mean it's the opposite of what it should be. So, diversity in and of itself is not enough, and if you don't have inclusion, people run away. We have to move beyond representation and actually have engagement where people are learning from each other and are growing together. So diversity without inclusion won't work, and that's why you're seeing people leave because they didn't feel the same in an environment in which they can grow and develop."

When the topic is raised explicitly, CEOs confirmed the value of inclusion:

- **MacAfee, Porter Novelli:** "The inclusion part of D & I really is about culture and environment: Do you have an environment . . . that allows all the differences coming together to really flourish into a bigger opportunity for your organization?"

- **Neale, Golin:** "From an inclusion standpoint, it is having an environment [where] anyone no matter where they come from, whether that be country, social [or] economic background, has an equal opportunity to achieve their highest potential."

THE ROLE OF THE CEO IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Most CEOs see themselves as leading the direction of diversity and inclusion by providing "strategic direction," "creating a safe environment" and getting buy-in through establishing "high business objectives" and "empowering leaders." As MacAfee, Porter Novelli put it, "I feel like it absolutely has to come through me, as an expectation, a requirement that everyone knows that this a part of who we are, it's a strategic business imperative."

Some CEOs work through human resources departments to achieve D&I objectives. At FleishmanHIllard, the CEO meets regularly with his Chief of Staff, his Chief Talent and Development Officer and the head of Cultural Development. At Burson-Marsteller, Baer engages with internal human resources professionals and external consultants in the hiring process. M Booth's Bornstein works with her senior vice president, vice president and Chief People Officer, a newly created HR function.

Smith, Ogilvy Public Relations said, "It is a partnership between me and HR which is the conscience of the organization. They hold the data in every direction and leaders to account."

Other CEOs expressed a personal commitment to the issue that transcends traditional departmental boundaries. At Weber Shandwick, D&I is marked a "high performance objective" which ties directly to CEO deliverables and senior reports, according to Polansky. "It can't be only an HR function or only a D&I function," he said. "It has to be a core part of the senior leader's responsibility and accountability. They are a core part of our organization's 'high performance objectives.' People throughout our organization relate to D&I because they embrace how it fuels collaboration and employee satisfaction."

Casey, Padilla added "The only thing I could say is that 'I live it.' People know how important it is to me. People know my activities in the community and how they're all centered around closing the opportunity gap, and I carry that forward. You really have to demonstrate that you're in the game here."

Others were skeptical about making D&I a CEO crusade without taking other visible actions to stress its importance or even assigning metrics to D&I. Grayling's Harris states: "It's who we are and what we represent. I think you can't just talk the talk, you gotta walk it. And I think there's a lot of talking right now and not a lot of walking. "

Six respondents cited authenticity as part of setting the tone for the organization. As Neale, Golin put it, "If you only have the CEO talking about it, often the irony is the people who are. . . making the day to day decisions . . . reject it just because they are being told to do something. We need to make our leaders feel empowered . . . to make these decisions and feel that they will be compensated accordingly."

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE CEO

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It was difficult for many of the CEOs to quantify the amount of time they spent on D&I initiatives. More than half of the respondents did not answer the question directly or did not assign a percentage of their time dedicated to diversity and inclusion initiatives. The maximum amount of CEO time taken up by D&I issues was 20%.

Four respondents stated about 5% of their time is dedicated to diversity and inclusion initiatives with one providing a range from 5-10%. Two of the four have dedicated D&I or HR staff focused on D&I initiatives. Two of the 16 respondents stated that they spent 20% of their time on such initiatives, with one providing a range between 15-20% of their time.

Others felt that the amount of time they spent was less important than the level of priority which they give it within their organizations. The CEOs who did not provide an estimate of their time tended to believe that a percentage of time was less of an appropriate metric for measuring the importance of D&I in their organizations than the actions that they take or the tone that they set.

For example, Saunders, FleishmanHillard, said "You're putting out a fire here, and are we . . . making enough of a priority in diversity as we ought to do? I think the real question is the level of diversity at the more senior level and we would be no different [from other agencies] in that respect."

Other comments that reflected this point of view:

- Flaherty, Ketchum: "I never tried to put it into percentages but the important thing is that it is integrated into the strategy of the company."

- Finn, Finn Partners: "My role is to identify this as an issue that's important to us, to set some goals, to ask individuals to take responsibility for meeting those goals and then for keeping me posted on an ongoing basis."

- Edelman, Edelman: "I don't think about what percentage of my time that I'm involved in it or report on it every month. We review the results strategically every year in the business. It's more of a constant."

- Baer, Burson-Marsteller: "I cannot really give you a percentage of time that I spent on these initiatives. I wouldn't be able to give you a percentage of how much time I devote to new client development either, because I am doing it all the time, and the same is true with diversity and inclusion.

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Achieving D&I goals is complicated by several factors, including the revenue and cost pressures that agencies face, client expectations, the legacy culture of public relations firms, the organizational structure of many of them, and the available labor pool. The barriers to entry appear varied, with layers of complexity pertaining to culture, socio-economic backgrounds, acceptance of a diverse workforce by the clients and not having the right environment to foster growth.

One fundamental challenge is to develop a singular definition for D&I that would serve as a measurable standard by which to gauge progress across all agencies. The meaning of "Diversity and Inclusion" changes due to the varied perspectives of clients, as well as those of executives within the same agency and across agencies.

One potential barrier, some CEOs believe, is that many young people, especially those in underrepresented groups, are not aware of the profession, which makes recruitment of diverse talent challenging. Many professionals find out about the public relations profession through a family member or friend who is in the profession, and those in minority communities may not have any personal contacts in the profession. The lack of familiarity with the field among people of diverse backgrounds may make it difficult to recruit a diverse workforce. Josh Rosenberg, CEO, Day One Agency, thinks the reasons we may not have more people that represent diversity could be the result of the training they received or of the other career paths they may have taken that are not PR and marketing related. He says it is a challenge finding diverse candidates, particularly as a start-up, when the recruitment infrastructure is not there yet.

Second, some CEOs think the public relations industry has not attracted diverse talent because the industry does not hold the competitive financial or professional attraction that other industries, such as law of business, might have for diverse students. Bornstein, M Booth, said, "I think our challenge goes back to a time when diverse candidates coming out of college or mid-level jobs may not have viewed PR as an aspirational or higher paying discipline. They viewed positions in ad firms, law firms, and on Wall Street as more successful."

A third barrier to improving D&I is that even for agencies that recruit diverse talent and hire diverse entry-level staffs, there is a challenge in investing time and energy in the onboarding and the formal training/mentoring process when the pressure is on to ramp up quickly for clients. Retention then becomes a problem because diverse applicants may not feel that they are getting the support they need to feel a part of their work group and agency or corporate culture.

It is difficult to foster a sense of belonging for new hires from diverse backgrounds due to the lack of diverse mentors and role models in senior positions.

- **Neale, Golin** adds: "There are a lack of role models. There are similar themes for people of color and people from different ethnic backgrounds coming into this industry because they've never been in this position. Many feel, 'there's no one really there that looks like me or has had a cultural background similar to mine.'"

- **Casey, Padilla** remarked that some people don't go into the profession because they don't see people like them in the profession.

Related to this issue is that it takes time for new hires to move through the pipeline and gain the needed experience to rise to senior positions.

- **Flaherty, Ketchum** described the issue in this way: "I think it has to do with generational kind of progress. Until recently, there weren't enough women in leadership in our field even though over the past 20 years the field has been 70% women. But if you went back to the 70s when the current CEOs came into the field, it was not majority women…But the pipeline was not as plentiful 30-40 years ago when our current leaders came into the field."

Finally, some of the CEOs admit that their firms have historical legacies that have impeded D&I.

- **Smith's** perspective is that diversity was historically linked to social class: "Back in the late 80s in the UK the diversity issue was one of social class. If I take my own experience in the UK PR industry, there was little diversity. Exclusion was a class issue. In the 80s, if you looked at PR agencies, they were populated by lots of un-diverse upper middle class people. It happened because of class. . . . rather [than a] gender and inclusion problem. If you don't even know that the industry exists, you never apply for it and therefore the supply was always from the middle class. The barriers I think are first visibility of the industry to the people we need to attract."

- **Baer, Burson-Marsteller:** "There is too much of a history across the entire field of a lack of diversity at all levels. . . . What that means is that we have to redouble our efforts to make sure that we are finding great candidates for senior roles, even if they come from outside of the field."

- **Edelman, Edelman:** "The challenges are partially historical, and some unconscious bias that is cultural."

- **Bornstein, M Booth:** "A lot of the larger legacy firms have a white, male DNA in the higher ranks. We saw a lot of women in the mid-level rungs leave the

workforce to become stay at home or part-time working moms."

HIRING DECISIONS

The CEO responses reflect significant thought about priorities in their hiring decisions – diversity vs. experience or other characteristics. Client priorities appear to drive hiring decisions. In addition, they note that there is no quick fix to a perceived gap in skills training.

Some CEOs regard hiring decisions with the lens of what might be called a "numbers game" in the staff of their companies. More than a quarter of the respondents believe that achieving demographic and ethnic balance in their work force boils down to "a numbers game."

- **Polansky, Weber Shandwick**: "To some extent it is a numbers game. To some degree it has to be a numbers game because if you're not focused on increasing your numbers, you're not going be successful. It's also about creating a distinctive differentiating workforce."

- **Casey, Padilla:** "Numbers are kind of the ante. In the real world it is making sure that people have a good experience and that the whole organization learns from each other. "

A majority regard numerical targets as a facile and unproductive approach to the D&I problem.

- **Edelman, Edelman:** "I don't think it's a numbers game, I think it's a quality game. It's a quality of the agency game. The idea that somehow this should be a quota-based place is wrong. We're not going to do quotas, we're definitely going to do targets. We are going to get young kids who are able to be leaders in the future."

- **Harris, Grayling:** "It should never be a numbers game. I think it should just be inherent in who you are and what you stand for. I think the day when it comes to how many women do you have, how many men do you have, how many African-Americans, how many Asians, how many Indians is a bad place for us to be. I think it should just be inherent in who you are and what you stand for."

- **Rosenberg, Day One Agency:** "I don't think diversity should be a numbers game. I think it needs to be a talent game. We should also be trying to figure out how to potentially train for senior management, if the issue is, you can't find diverse employees at a more senior level. Maybe we need to think about how to

train and grow diverse team members in that more junior level to get those numbers up, but I would hate to think that there was a business out there that isn't hiring because of numbers."

- **Hovland, DeVries Global:** "Progress is moving beyond approaching D&I as some sort of statistical requirement and recognizing diversity as a business driver. I actually think the future will be about more collaboration, more people from different backgrounds coming together to solve the world's biggest problems. That's what I'm excited about and not just ticking a box."

A few CEOs expressed the nuanced view that the numbers are important but are not sufficient to achieve both diversity *and* inclusiveness.

- **Flaherty, Ketchum:** "It's not just a numbers game because it has to do with giving people opportunity inside the company once they're here, not just getting them here. Focusing on the work experience and growing a career is what increases retention for everyone. One of the things this (presidential) election showed me is that we don't place enough emphasis on lower income people as marketers. It's half the country, and where's our lower income practice? So as we tackle a focus on ethnic diversity and what had been traditionally minorities, we have to realize that there are other groups also. This field has a gender problem in relation to young men entering the field. So we have to go after that too."

- **Baer, Burson-Marsteller:** "Numbers matter. Without the numbers, we will not be able to actually advance what we are aiming to do. But if it's only numbers, then we're not really achieving our goals. Our most important goal is to have people who truly understand everyone, who understand the value of diversity and why having a diverse talent pool allows us to be even better as client service professionals than we might be otherwise. Those are all factors that go well beyond the numbers."

- **Bornstein, M Booth:** "For a lot of organizations, it is a numbers game, right? And those numbers keep changing and that's why we're not doing well. Because it's not a numbers game, it's a culture game. You've got to fix the disease and not the symptoms. The disease is in the DNA of cultures and organizations. It's sensitive and it is the unconscious bias we don't even understand. You've got to educate a community and make sure they understand how to retain talent of all types and that's the problem."

- **Neale, Golin:** "If your objective is to have talent that's reflective of the communities in which we're based and we're not there yet, then numbers would be a part of that. But it's (also) having a cultural environment which is truly inclusive. It's working to make sure that voices are heard within the agency that may be different than the ones before and creating an environment where

people feel comfortable."

Some CEOs are open about diversity preferences in their hiring decision. "It's a difficult question," Smith said. "I'm on the record from years ago where if I had two people of equal talent, I will always hire the woman." He noted that when he became global CEO, he expanded the executive committee from four members, all of whom were white males, to 13 — six of whom were women.

Most respondents stated that there was a level of immediacy in filling positions, and so the investment of time becomes an issue. If diversity is a priority, then both clients and agencies need to invest time in the on-boarding process.."

- **Saunders, Fleishman Hillard:** "I absolutely believe in positive discrimination. The reference to positive discrimination reflects the fact that in an effort to advance the diversity of the organization in order to better serve our clients, we will give added consideration to candidates with a diverse background when evaluating a pool of otherwise equally qualified candidates. In one scenario, . . . if I have two equal candidates . . .   we need for a period of time . . . to positively discriminate in favor of diverse backgrounds. We are talking about people who are not Caucasian, who are coming from U.S. minorities…. But, when I look around the halls of Fleishman Hillard, I don't see enough senior diversity. We are currently working harder to find those people.

- **Edelman, Edelman:** "With the increasingly diverse marketplace, that skill set, that insight and understanding of those (diverse) communities is increasingly important to our success on behalf of our clients. In that particular instance to select between someone who has the potential and someone who has diversity in his background, we'd probably choose the latter."

- **Neale, Golin:** "Hire for potential. If the diverse candidate maybe hadn't achieved that level of core qualifications, but we just believed that their potential was great, I would feel very comfortable making that decision (to hire them) because we need a more diverse workforce. But, that also depends on what the rest of the team looks for from the skills point of view."

The CEOs expressed more hesitation about diversity preferences in hiring for senior positions. "One of the biggest challenges we have," according to MacAfee, Porter Novelli, "are in terms of the recruitment of minorities, diversity, and ethnicity at more senior levels." There is a responsibility to hire the best candidate for the position, and a concern for setting up the diverse candidate for failure if he/she does not possess the skills required for the position. As Williams, Four Communications said, "I try and hire diverse candidates at entry level in particular because we can mold people very quickly who may, through no fault of their own, have missed out on the background and the experience they need to compete on a level playing field. At a more senior level, I think the outcome often depends, unfortunately, on the requirements of a specific role.

There are some roles where client pressures are massive and people have to hit the ground running and you don't have as much time to develop people straight into that role without prior experience. "

Others had different priorities in hiring at all levels when it came to developing a diverse pool of talent and hiring for skills versus potential.

- **Flaherty, Ketchum:** "I'm not sure I buy into that as binary choice. A good version of achieving the right level of diversity without having to change your hiring standards is to dramatically increase the pool of diverse candidates. So that you have people with the same amount of talent, same amount of energy and initiative, but you end up with a population that at least reflects the population of the country."

- **Harris, Grayling:** "I always go for the best candidate because, ultimately, it's our responsibility to put the best people in front of our clients every day. It's a disservice to this team and our clients if we don't do that. We would go for the best candidate, but . . . as part of that process, we look for the best candidates that also represent a diverse [set]."

- **Casey, Padilla:** "If we're hiring for a specific client and we know that client only cares about the work, that they do not have a D&I bone in their body, and that the employee's work is good work and she keeps growing and learning, it's going to be the skill-based choice. If it's an entry level job where we're going to do a little more training at the top, or if it's a client whose standards aren't as high, then we'll do that [potential].

ONBOARDING

Diversity and Inclusion for any PR firm implies changes in retention, as well as hiring. CEOs recognize the need to invest more time and energy in the onboarding of new employees.

As Bornstein, M Booth said, "The challenges are that even if you get good diverse candidates in, like people of color coming in at junior levels in an agency, they don't stay because the agency hasn't thought about how to provide the right community for them to address how they see the world, which is very different from how a white man or woman sees the world. We need to know how a straight woman sees it versus how a homosexual or a gay woman sees it or a gay man would see it. LGBTQ is also really important."

Some CEOs reported that their agencies are putting more efforts into their onboarding process, and the need for more people of color as mentors, especially, in senior level positions.

- **Neale, Golin:** "How are you successfully keeping diverse candidates after they've been there for three to four years. A big trend I know agencies in our sector see is that they will get great young talent in, train them up and then because there are so few people at the middle management level of color, the economic currency goes up, and a big corporations will say, 'I'm going to double your salary, you can come work for PepsiCo or come work for [Bank of America].' We can work really hard, and I'm sure there's more we can do to ensure that this is a truly inclusive environment where anyone can succeed, but how do you then counter the economic reality and can you?"

- **Baer, Burson-Marsteller:** "That does appear to have been a challenge in organizations like this one, but we are working very hard through a variety of programs to improve on this front. As we add more senior people at senior roles, they also start to serve as mentors. So, we have made some very senior hires."

- **Polansky, Weber Shandwick:** "I think that in a broad sense, we've been taking a hard look at the onboarding not just from the D&I point of view but overall. How we incorporate into that appropriate mentorship so that when people join the organization, they have people around and help them navigate understand where the blue sky is, how they can best contribute."

MEASUREMENT

It is difficult to say how many of the companies have Diversity and Inclusion metrics in place now. It appears that many of them do not track such metrics perhaps because of limits to what agencies can disclose due to their holding companies' strict guidelines. Some agencies have now started to make their EEOC filings public for good measure as pressure mounts from procurement officers. One quarter of the interview subjects shared their metrics with this author. One of the submissions (Finn Partners) contained rich detail about ethnic diversity across all levels of the organizations, while the others provided summaries.

It is difficult to fully assess the level of D&I in PR firms without such hard data. As Polansky put it, "What doesn't get measured, doesn't get done. People worry about measuring something like diversity and inclusion because they don't want to project to the world the numbers aren't as good as they should be. If that is the case, come up with a plan to improve the numbers."

CEOs reported that they collect a variety of metrics to manage and plan D&I. Some collect data on the numbers of employees in different groups:

- **Brendon Craigie, former CEO, Hotwire:** "Since we're a part of a public group with a focus around gender diversity, we have a monthly HR cultural report, which looks at all of the key metrics around diversity, so we measure it in terms of the data and facts. For me, the gap is more around getting people from different backgrounds, and this is about ethnic and generational diversity. There should be representation for multiple ages in our workforce."

- **Williams, Four Communications:** "We measure our numbers and our progress. We set a target we are trying to reach. So, for example, our gender balance is skewed and we are trying to get more men into our business over the last few years. We're trying to measure how successful we're being year on year."

- **Flaherty, Ketchum:** "We have a pretty good percentage of employees who are diverse. We have percentages of people who are Asian, Hispanic, African-American in our offices."

- **Baer, Burson-Marsteller:** "We measure it in terms of becoming a more diverse workforce making sure that we are bringing more people into the firm at every level, from senior down to the entry level. We have worked very hard to make that happen especially in the last few years. We do measure our success in

terms of numbers but we also measure it in terms of factors that are harder to quantify, such as the extent to which people are working together and are recognizing and appreciating the different perspectives that are being brought to our work."

Others conduct firm-wide surveys which incorporate D&I measures:

- **Polansky, Weber Shandwick:** "There's a lot of ways we measure success. We do a climate survey every year where we ask questions about D&I and culture in the organization more generally. We look at our hiring practices and retention across all different types of groups in our company.

- **Hovland, DeVries Global:** "We have a formalized survey we participate in through IPG every year. And it's year over year improvement or not."

- **Bornstein, M Booth:** "We're doing a D&I survey, which we're going to be sending out before the holidays to create a benchmark on how the culture feels right now. We'll repeat that survey every year to benchmark how we're doing, to see if we're moving in the right direction, and to figure out both qualitatively and quantitatively where we need to go."

- **Saunders, FleishmanHillard:** "Fleishman Hillard is 70 years this year and to mark that, I wanted to do something of substance. We did a good job researching and getting people's perspectives on it and came up with a big initiative this year called FH4Inclusion. It's all around the common theme of social exclusion and how to try and make it social inclusion."

OTHER BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES

The D&I initiative most identified by many CEOs was implicit bias training. Nine of the 16 respondents have either conducted implicit or unconscious bias training or will do so this year. The remaining seven respondents said they have not conducted training. Implicit or unconscious bias training is about raising the consciousness levels of employees to make them aware of biases they would otherwise not know they had. Two of the CEOs said they conducted an employee survey or some type of role play. As Edelman put it: "We have a new D&I training program that's being rolled out this spring, which will be mandatory for all U.S. colleagues. We're also working on an unconscious bias training around the globe to launch later this year."

Polansky also adheres to the importance of bias sensitivity. "I think it makes a big difference," he said. "The challenge is you can't just do it once, you have to over time make sure you drive it through the entire organization."

Beyond implicit bias training, measurement, and the CEOs' individual efforts, many companies have adopted other practices to promote D&I which could serve as examples for others to consider.

- **Strategic planning**: Four of the CEOs cited D&I as a "strategic business initiative," a "strategic imperative" or part of strategic planning that requires regular monitoring and reporting at annual meetings or on a year-on-year basis. Flaherty, Ketchum, said, "We have an annual meeting with every office and practice in the unit of the company and they'll report on their progress on D&I in their annual plans as part of strategic planning, which might include the percentage of employees and activities."

- **Adjustments to hiring process**: Mike Fernandez, now CEO of Burson Masteller, explains that his agency builds diversity considerations into the hiring process: "We have general adherence to what the National Football League knows as the Rooney Rule. The Rooney Rule requires diverse slates for every major job that you have in your organization. When my team comes to me with the name of someone they want to hire, one of the first questions I ask, in addition to why they think this candidate is the best one for the job, is 'Did we have a diverse slate of candidates, who were the other top candidates we looked at and why did we make this decision.'" While this process might not lead directly to the hiring of a diverse candidate,"it does prompt the individual decision makers to think more deeply how they source diverse talent, and the

more diverse talent they come in contact with and interview over time the more comfortable they become with hiring diverse talent."

- **Goal setting: Finn, Finn Partners** said, "Today, 19% of our staff is black, Hispanic or Asian. This is one of the highest percentages in the industry (the average is about 11%). Recognizing that there is much to be done to improve this all around, my goal is to see an increase to at least 25% over the next few years." Neale, Golin, said D&I is about bringing audiences together that clients are trying to reach. This year, his agency's "big bet" is centered on diversity. All offices and management levels need to be reflective of the communities in which they're based at a cultural and ethnic level by 2020.

- **Tying goals to compensation:** Polansky, Weber Shandwick said, "We do talk about our numbers internally, and about how we're doing in terms of attracting talent and in promoting people. Our senior team knows that our success in this area is tied to their compensation." Golin's Neale said, "My pay is determined by how much progress we're making there. It has gone from softer targets to harder targets, so we are getting a breadth of diverse candidates into our agency and we are retaining them. We are placing, securing or promoting more diverse candidates into senior levels of the organization. Our ambition by 2020 is for our offices to be representative of the communities that they're based in at all levels. It's often easier to do that in England in the IT department because that is a career choice for British Asians. In many cases their friends, relatives or even their parents may have done it. Not so much so in public affairs or in consumer marketing. But now we measure our Managing Directors on this as part of our new D&I internal reboot. That will be the criteria on which we remunerate our leaders around the world."

- **Assigning responsibility at a high level:** Some of the companies, just under half of those interviewed, have D&I officers. These executives are usually managed by the Human Resources division in most organizations.   Edelman created a Managing Director role of D&I two years ago to help drive diversity and pay close attention to strategy and implementation. The agency has also established a global team which understands the various nuances and needs of D&I around the world. As its CEO said, "The issues in the US are of course different than Asia, than issues in Europe and so on. That's comprised of colleagues at senior level from those respective regions that drive work and create change on the ground and the market."

- **Affinity groups:** Some companies such as Ogilvy Public Relations and Burson-Marsteller have introduced affinity groups where people get together and discuss issues that affect their communities. These affinity groups also serve as outlets for people to talk about issues that concern them. Flaherty, Ketchum has diversity and inclusion councils in all of his North American offices. "We have very active involvement in Omnicom's LGBTQ, we are sponsors of

ColorComm (an organization promoting women of color in PR)," he said. "I think our D&I councils are in part intended to address that, to give people an outlet, a place for open discussion and to get support from their peers. That was at the core of why these councils were created."

- **Recruitment**: Some companies are rethinking their recruitment strategies. As part of Golin's five strategies for this year, actively recruiting people from within the communities they operate is a strategic priority in developing a diverse pool of talent and fulfilling their duty as a corporate citizen. Hotwire is "working with a number of organizations that encourage African-American graduates to pursue careers in communications," Bates said.

- **Onboarding:** As noted earlier, some companies have added components to their onboarding programs to help ease diverse hires into the company's culture and help them feel more comfortable and welcomed in the organization. Clients and agencies sometimes need to be patient and willing to invest more time in the onboarding process to fill entry level and senior level positions.

- **Diversity mentoring**: It can be challenging for a non-American CEO to understand the United States history across race and ethnic and socioeconomic lines. To address this, Neale, Golin has a young African-American PR professional mentor to teach him about American culture through the eyes of an African-American. Culture, in and out of the organization, plays a role in the comfort level of diverse employees.

But there is some skepticism about programs such as these. As Harris, Grayling put it, "It's not like we have a formal diversity program in place, because as an agency it's just who we are and how we operate. I respect the fact that there are agencies who like to promote their diversity programs. I think that's a little self- serving. You just have to be who you are and what you stand for and not something you promote as being a good partner or a big believer in the advancement of women."

In a similar vein, Bornstein, M Booth said, "I think people who say that they're doing a good job or a better job in our industry, are hyperbolic, patting themselves on the back. I don't think anybody is doing a good job at it."

NEED FOR INDUSTRY COOPERATION

Time is ticking, no one agency can solve the public relations industry's diversity and inclusion problem alone. Diversity of thought is needed at the management table. CEOs are keen to work together in solving this problem from both recruitment and retention standpoints.

- **Williams, Four Communications:** "I want to know the facts and statistics about the industry and my competitors and how we benchmark against them. I think that would be really interesting. Then I think the ultimate question is, 'does that make any difference?' Moral difference: it's right, because it's to do with equality. I'm really passionate about that, but it would also be very interesting to see if it actually improves the way organizations function or efficiency or creativity with the audiences, the fans or the consumers. I'd be very interested in whether there are metrics about that and if we can work on them over time."

- **Baer, Burson-Marsteller:** "I'd like to know more about best practices and what else we could be doing better. It's always good to hear from our peers about what they're doing so that we can learn from them and to understand the successful experiences they've had and how they measure success. How do they see success demonstrated with D&I when it comes to working with clients? And what else do they do to help make sure that their diverse populations are at home and thriving and finding pathways to success in an organization. That would be valuable."

- **Bornstein, M Booth:** "What's working, what's not working, how do you know when it's working? I'd ask them all that and what they are personally doing and what their organizations are doing. We know what our collective goal is. We need to do, not talk. Diversity is about doing. We have a long way to go. How are we going to collectively get there?"

- **Craigie:** "How can we shake this up? From the ground up we need to attract a much more diverse intake into our companies. That means getting out there and promoting the profession outside of our strongholds and established communities. Success in the future will be directly linked to our ability to build a much more diverse talent pipeline."

- **Edelman, Edelman:** "This is an industry challenge. What can we do collectively to advance our common goal? There have been different groups and committees, but recognizing this across the board, everyone has the same

challenge and we are literally cannibalizing each other. Instead, we should be asking how can we better work together to advance the goal."

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION: UNBUNDLING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The CEOs generally agree that the industry still has some distance to travel before achieving full D&I. Several identify several key areas to drive the next steps towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

- **Clear definitions**: Though definitions may vary across agencies, within an agency, the term "Diversity and Inclusion" itself needs to be clearly defined. It needs to be clearly aligned with an agency's mission and values, and culture. In order to do it well, it has to be intrinsically tied to the agency's ethos and everything it does.

- **Collection of metrics:** It would be helpful for more PR firms to collect the kinds of metrics that Finn Partners collects and the kinds of surveys that a number of firms undertake. Such metrics serve as baselines for improvement and help firms to gauge their progress in meeting D&I goals.

- **Disclosure of metrics:** It would also be helpful to the industry if firms shared some of the metrics they collected. As noted earlier, CEOs are seeking to learn about what others are doing and what works best. Disclosures of D&I metrics would enable firms to benchmark their progress against that of the industry.

- **Industry-wide support**: There are some ancillary organizations that have engaged the industry through some D&I initiatives, but those have been inconsistent. Sustained efforts need to be put in place to make real change. Discussions cannot be insular in nature and limited to a select few affinity groups They must be inclusive of all stakeholders to avoid talking in the echo chamber.

- **Client and industry pressure**: Grayling's Harris, Grayling said, "The opportunity is for everyone to wake up and understand that it's a new world, it's a new day, there are new expectations of us. The more organizations demand that agencies put a diverse team in front of them or represent their work with a diverse team, the more changes are going to happen."

- **Recruitment:** Public relations industry representatives say they are challenged to find qualified people who represent diversity and inclusion. Yet, the public relations and communications majors are the most popular majors on many college campuses, both on an undergraduate and graduate level. Public relations would certainly be attractive to some of them.

  Many agencies recruit from the same colleges, year after year. Expanding beyond this pool of schools, which some agencies have begun to do, could be helpful in addressing some of the barriers to entry, as described by the CEOs, with diverse students who may not know about or may not have considered the field. It might also be helpful to ensure that recruiters undergo the same sort of implicit bias training programs that some CEOs have adopted for their U.S. employees.

- **Publicity for public relations in student populations**: An investment in more engagement with colleges and universities by agencies and the PR Council could be helpful. Although there are a few noteworthy programs engaging students on a high school level, such as through the PRSA Foundation and The LAGRANT Foundation, PR agencies could support more programs like these at the high school and college levels to attract new students to the profession. Finn Partners was a "founding sponsor" of ColorComm "and our Senior Partner Helen Shelton has been an active board members for four years," according to Finn, Finn Partners. In addition, Finn said that "we will also continue our work with The LAGRANT Foundation, presenting career and professional development workshops in our offices nationwide.'

- **Executive focus on onboarding**: Respondents admitted to not spending enough time in the onboarding process once the diverse applicants are in the door. Diversity mentoring would also be helpful. More effort needs to be invested in understanding the diverse work force and where they live and how they think.

- **Adjustments to policies for time away from work:** Bates noted that flexible policies on work scheduling can help promote diversity. "There are people who have different situations in their home life." she said. "We currently have folks who have kids with life threatening illnesses or long term disabilities and we provide flexible work opportunities for people like that. That again is sort of a part of the diversity initiative." Golin's Neale offered an interesting perspective on the effects of maternity/paternity leave. "So, which is in the area of D&I, we have another problem in the industry is that [some] women leave when they go on maternity leave. And often they decide to take a career break of three to five years or more. And when their son and daughter goes to school, they decide they want to join the work phase, there is an incredible prejudice of those being wasted years and that you've been out of the business for so long like five years so you can't join it or you rejoin it at a lower level and there are issues of

confidence and being able to hold yourself in an environment like this again and all the social and digital changes that are taking place. So one of the things that we do is called the "returnship" that we offer to women. One day it will become men when they go on paternity leave, which is difficult at the moment. We're not quite Sweden yet."

VISIONS FOR 2020

We will be entering a new decade in about two and a half years and we, as a global society, are racing to meet client demands, adapting to new technologies and staying relevant in the face of artificial intelligence. Here are snippets of CEOs' outlook for D&I in 2020.

- **Hovland, DeVries Global: "**I would love for it (diversity and inclusion) not to be a separate topic. I would love for it just to be ingrained in the way we do business. And to have made a lot more headway than we have today."

- **Smith, Ogilvy Public Relations:** "I could think about success that's like three to four years out. I'd love to think that we've achieved the leadership diversity, or at least see some measurable progress in that direction. I'd like to see us having monetized the opportunity by helping provide clients and brands with services, which help them reach the diverse audiences more efficiently and more effectively. We should be able to measure whether we're doing that better or not as well."

- **Saunders, Fleishman Hillard:** "At Fleishman Hillard there are 2,800 people and roughly 200 people of those are senior. By 2020, we ought to be able to say 30 of those are people of diverse backgrounds. The mid and junior level, I think we're doing pretty good."

- **Edelman, Edelman:** "I hope that we have respectfully fifty percent of our leadership as women. We'll have made more serious progress in employing more senior people of color because currently we stand at ten percent or below. And we'll have a really strong pipeline of young ones who want to come from primarily black colleges and other places.

- **Polansky, Weber Shandwick:** "My aspiration is always to be the best place to work. To be a best place to work you must have a diverse population. I feel we're making good progress. We need to ensure that D&I continues to be a management priority. If you build a culture that celebrates diversity and rewards success, you'll see all kinds of people rise to more leadership positions in the years ahead.

- **Finn, Finn Partners:** "I hope everybody catches up with us. And hope we get to twenty-five percent . I think you can't stop trying. It should become something that we don't have to talk about, it should become natural for all the agencies."

- **Williams, Four Communications:** "I'd like a better gender balance by 2020, and for us that's more men coming into the business. I would like as good or better diversity in terms of ethnicity. That's a massive issue and one that we need to work at more. The third thing I'm concerned about is hiring employees with a disability. I would love to see that change, I'm not sure how much it's going to change by 2020 in our business or in the industry or in the U.K."

- **Neale, Golin:** "From a D&I point of view, the agency's clear goal is to be the defining agency of the decade, which means to do brave and bold work and to become the most progressive brand in our industry. Obviously D&I is a big part of that. There are other things around gender, what does your maternity and paternity pay look like."

- **Bornstein, M Booth:** "I think it's the same question everyone's asking about the world at large. The outlook of our organization regarding D&I is really bullish."

- **Flaherty, Ketchum:** "I think we're making really good progress. One of the best things that's happening with diversity and inclusion in our field is that we steer the field in our direction of new content place, data analytics, web development. It's getting more diverse, not just because of D&I issues, but because we went looking for artists videographers, animators. There are a lot more people here with piercings, tattoos and dreadlocks. There are also more men because we shifted what we needed. I think one of the unintended positive consequences is diversity. Ketchum is a cooler place, not just here but around the world. Our field tended to hire smart articulate people who presented themselves well, but it's never as creatively diverse as the advertising agency. Now our field is becoming more creative and more diverse in what it's trying to do. One of the consequences of that is we're getting a more diverse employee base. When I look to 2020, I see these things converging, a more effective push to have more people of color in the company and a kind of a change in the candidate base because of the work we're doing."

The CEOs, in short, expressed bullishness in their efforts to promote D&I. All of those who spoke to this author are committed to it; many of them have put practices in place devoted to it. But many are also hungry for information. And so learning from each other's' best practices and initiating dialogue within the industry should enable their goals to become more attainable. However, as the industry struggles to define D&I priorities and grapple with issues of retention and promotion as well as hiring, profound change may be difficult in the decade's remaining two and a half years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS ASKED IN CEO INTERVIEWS

1. How much attention do you give Diversity and Inclusion initiatives?
2. How much of your time do you dedicate to Diversity and Inclusion initiatives relative to your other responsibilities?
3. Define Diversity and Inclusion.
4. How much do Diversity and Inclusion initiatives tie to your business objectives and overall strategy?
5. What do you think the opportunities and challenges are? Is there anything compounding the issue such as multi generational workforce?
6. Training?
7. How do you measure success of your Diversity and Inclusion initiatives?
8. What is your role as a senior exec in fostering Diversity and Inclusion initiatives?
9. What are the levels of interface and accountability?
10. Have you considered a self-assessment of your employees in addressing implicit bias? In other words, making employees more self-aware?
11. Why do you think as an industry, we don't have more people who represent D&I at a senior level?
12. If you had to choose between a person who possesses the right skills and talent versus one who has the potential and represents Diversity and Inclusion, who would you hire?
13. It's been said that many organizations are just focused on increasing their numbers with respect to Diversity and Inclusion. What are your thoughts. Is it a numbers game?
14. On the other hand, I've spoken to people who represent Diversity and Inclusion, and say they feel as if they've been hired for their diversity but there's no path or mentoring. What are your thoughts?
15. How do we prepare the next generation of leaders? What does it take to be one?dale
16. There's formal and informal channels within the organizations for mentoring. How much of it is formal and informal within yours? Is there mentoring that happens in the workplace?
17. What's your outlook for 2020 for your organization?
18. What questions would you want to ask of your colleagues, competitors about diversity and inclusion?
19. What keeps you up at night? Problem you haven't solved yet?

20. What are you looking for in an ideal talent?

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Don Baer, Worldwide Chair and CEO, Burson-Marsteller

Barbara Bates, CEO, Hotwire

Dale Bornstein, CEO, M Booth

Lynn Casey, CEO, Padilla

Brendon Craigie, former CEO, Hotwire Richard Edelman, president and CEO, Edelman

Mike Fernandez, CEO U.S., Burson-Marsteller Peter Finn, Managing Partner, Finn Partners

Rob Flaherty, Chairman and CEO, Ketchum

Peter Harris, CEO U.S., Grayling

Heidi Hovland, CEO, DeVries Global

Brad MacAfee, CEO, Porter Novelli Matt Neale, CEO, Golin

Andy Polansky, CEO, Weber Shandwick Josh Rosenberg, CEO, Day One Agency

John Saunders, President and CEO, FleishmanHillard

Stuart Smith, Global CEO, Ogilvy Public Relations

Nan Williams, Group Chief Executive, Four Communications