

PRWeek

Master Class

How can you ensure your workforce is as diverse as the audience it targets?

Having a diverse workforce is imperative to the success of any PR agency trying to reach out to diverse audiences. However, the PR workforce does not currently represent the ethnic-minority community in the US. Therefore, the active recruitment and retention of multicultural talent in PR is necessary to create a diverse employee roster and ensure your agency is equipped to effectively engage all audiences.

The good news is there are many ways a company can recruit, develop, and retain diverse talent. One way to recruit diverse candidates is by partnering with organizations that foster diverse talent in the industry. For example, The Lagrant Foundation provides support for ethnic minority college students pursuing degrees in advertising, marketing, and PR with the goal of increasing the number of ethnic minorities employed in those fields. The organization provides agencies with candidates for internships and employment; students referred by Lagrant have been



Stephanie Howley

SVP of human resources, Cohn & Wolfe
stephanie.howley@cohnwolfe.com

“IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT CHANGES IN THE POPULATION BE REFLECTED IN THE PR WORKFORCE INDUSTRYWIDE”

– Stephanie Howley

pre-screened and mentored by the foundation and make exceptional candidates.

Developing multicultural staff is another important factor in ensuring a diverse workforce. One key way to do this is by encouraging staff to join professional groups such as the Hispanic Public Relations Association and the Black Public Relations Society. Another component is to establish a mentor program where high-ranking executives partner with junior staffers to guide them through their careers.

In 2010, the US Census Bureau reported that more than 30% of Americans belong to ethnic minority groups. These populations are expected to grow rapidly. It is imperative that changes in the population be reflected in the PR workforce industrywide. It's for these reasons that the recruitment of ethnic minorities into these fields is especially important. These recruitment, development, and retention strategies will help create an all-encompassing community where all audiences are reached.

Stephanie Howley, SVP of human resources, Cohn & Wolfe

cohn&wolfe