



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

EMERGING ISSUES

On 16th September 2020, CRF members gathered for **Diversity and Inclusion: Emerging Issues**, a Zoom Interactive Event. In conversation with **Stephen Frost**, CEO and Founder, Frost Included and former Head of Diversity and Inclusion for the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and **Alastair Procter**, Chief Human Resources Officer at Mediabrands, we explored the opportunities, challenges, and successes organisations are seeing as they broaden the scope of diversity and inclusion beyond gender, and as they grapple with the imperative to build and maintain inclusive cultures in remote working environments.



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CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:
EMERGING ISSUES**

ZOOM INTERACTIVE EVENT



- **Diversifying diversity.** Organisations are still working to achieve greater gender diversity, and yet building a workforce that is diverse across multiple dimensions is critical to meeting today's challenges. What are organisations doing to achieve racial/ethnic diversity and inclusion? What are the unique challenges?
- **Remote inclusion.** COVID-19 has, at least temporarily, sparked a remote working revolution for many organisations. While the flexibility inherent to remote working presents new opportunities to diversify the workforce, it also raises issues around inclusion of different groups. What are organisations doing to harness new opportunities for diversity while making sure that teams maintain inclusive practices, in order to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce?

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

We are living through an historic year in terms of social change and its impact on the ways we live and work, with ramifications likely to extend well beyond 2020. In particular, race has become a much more prominent theme in diversity and inclusion than hitherto.

True inclusion means going beyond HR practices to embed inclusion into the design processes of what organisations do. For example, in pharmaceutical companies, diversity becomes serious when it influences the design of clinical trials, because this leads to drugs that are suitable for a more diverse population.

Covid has brought a focus on remote diversity and inclusion. This can be both a challenge (for example biases can be amplified through remote working) – and an opportunity (blended working allows the traditional hierarchy to be rethought). This is a leadership issue, in which everyone can play a part in making positive change and seizing the opportunity.



The reaction to the death of George Floyd was unprecedented and represented a tipping point around race. In particular, it has prompted leaders to mobilise, make themselves accountable, listen and learn. As time goes on, the focus has evolved from communication and empathy to setting targets and taking tangible actions. This includes reengineering people processes such as performance management and promotions. Leaders are being held accountable by their own people, and this is sustaining momentum.

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The burden of work that needs to be done around inclusion should fall most heavily on those who are least discriminated against. With regard to race, this means that while ethnic minorities need to be included in developing the inclusion strategy, white people have to take the lead in educating themselves and being allies.

There are five elements to building inclusion:

- 1.Strategy** – embedding diversity in the development of business strategy.
- 2.Data** – being led by data. Data on race is a major gap and will hamper efforts to close the ethnicity pay gap.
- 3.Governance** – embedding inclusive mindsets in decision making processes.
- 4.Leadership** – seeing senior white people listen, educate themselves and speak out on race.
- 5.Systems** – designed to nudge the behaviours you want to see.



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Diversity, equity and inclusion are all important. However, inclusion is the most important. If you focus on getting inclusion right, some of the other issues take care of themselves to an extent because it takes you beyond the symptoms to the root cause.



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VISIBLE, VOCAL TOP LEADERSHIP MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE IN DRIVING THE ETHOS AROUND D&I. IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO BACK THIS UP WITH ACCOUNTABILITY, METRICS AND MEASUREMENT WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL IF YOU WANT TO SEE TANGIBLE PROGRESS. AT MEDIABRANDS, EACH BUSINESS CEO HAS ANNUAL GOALS FOR D&I; BOTH THEY AND THEIR TEAMS FEEL A MATERIAL IMPACT ON THEIR BONUS IF THEY DO NOT MEET TARGETS.





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AUDIENCE Q&A

Q How do you create meaningful momentum around inclusion and diversity in a multi-country business?

A *Some things are universal, for example bias. Others are specific to the local cultural context, for example there are constraints on what data you can monitor in France. Some organisations have developed an overarching values framework that's interpreted differently in local markets. Others have developed a global strategy and actioned it in different ways. You have to work both top-down and bottom-up and make sure your people have a stake in the plan.*

Q The reaction to BLM has provoked a strong moral and emotional response, but there also remains a commercial imperative for diversity. How do we strike the right balance between moral and commercial drivers?

A *We have focused on the commercial impact of diversity for many years. The commercial imperative is now overwhelming and has led to incremental gains over many years. The moral issue has suddenly come to the fore. This has allowed us to get traction with leaders quickly, and will allow HR to be more aggressive in pursuing our plans and proposals for inclusion. You can use the energy that lies behind the moral argument to build momentum.*

Q Race issues have taken on huge prominence this year, but gender still hasn't gone away. What should we do?

A *One critique of gender diversity activities is that they tended to implicitly focus on white women. Using an intersectional approach might be a way of bringing more people on board, growing the pie for all rather than addressing a series of competing interests.*

SPEAKERS



 EMAIL

STEPHEN FROST is a globally recognised diversity, inclusion and leadership expert, and founded Frost Included in 2012. He works with clients to embed inclusive leadership in their decision-making. Stephen previously worked in-house at KPMG as Head of D&I. From 2007-2012 Stephen designed, led and implemented the inclusion programmes for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games as Head of D&I for the London Organising Committee. Responsibilities included diversity across a 200,000-person workforce, \$2 billion procurement spend, and 57 delivery functions to inclusivity in an 11-million ticket programme and accessibility at 134 venues.



ALASTAIR PROCTER is Global Chief HR Officer for Mediabrands supporting the global business and its 12,500 people through a series of major transformational shifts in what has become one of the world's most dynamic and fast-paced industries. Joining Interpublic, (advertising group) in 2006, Alastair started in one of their two media divisions as HR Director, and then assumed additional EMEA responsibility for the second media division on the formation of Mediabrands in 2007. Alastair began his career in the hotel industry, where he held a number of generalist HR and Management Development roles for Radisson SAS and Inter-Continental. As well as an OD project-management role at Barclays, overseeing HR operations for approximately 7,000 employees.



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FURTHER READING

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If you are interested in joining the **Diversity, Inclusivity and Wellbeing Digital Community**, please contact Carmen von Rohr, Content and Digital Manager, at carmen@crforum.co.uk.

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23rd September 12.00PM BST

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DIGITAL CONFERENCE
Re-imagining the New Landscape: Reset, Renew and Thrive
12-13th October 13.15PM BST

📍 **ONLINE:**
Driving Business Transformation with Talent Analytics
4th November 12.00PM GMT