

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE:

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS OF DIVERSITY RESEARCH AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

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DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

In an increasingly culturally diverse and global communication environment... Theories and practices should reclaim the nuances of lived experiences and personal identities that impact how individuals select, receive, react to, and process messages.

(Vardeman-Winter, 2011, p. 415)

GENDER DISPARITIES

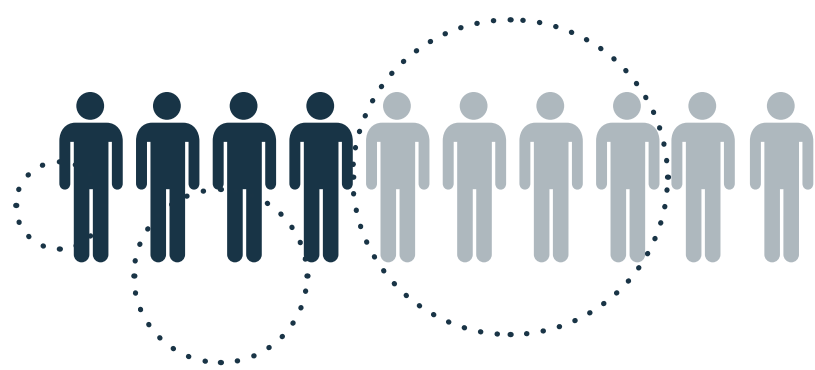


Women earn approximately **\$8,305 less** than their male peers annually, despite comprising most of the workforce.

In other words, that is **\$332,000 less** than male peers over a 40-year career.

(Dozier, Sha, & Shen, 2013, p. 13)

RESPECT & OPPORTUNITY



Four in 10 Black and Hispanic practitioners feel they are not treated with genuine respect.

(Applebaum, Walton, & Southerland, 2015, p. 7).

REACHING DIVERSE PUBLICS

A growing area of public relations research is exploring how various organizations are using strategic communication to reach and advocate for diverse publics.

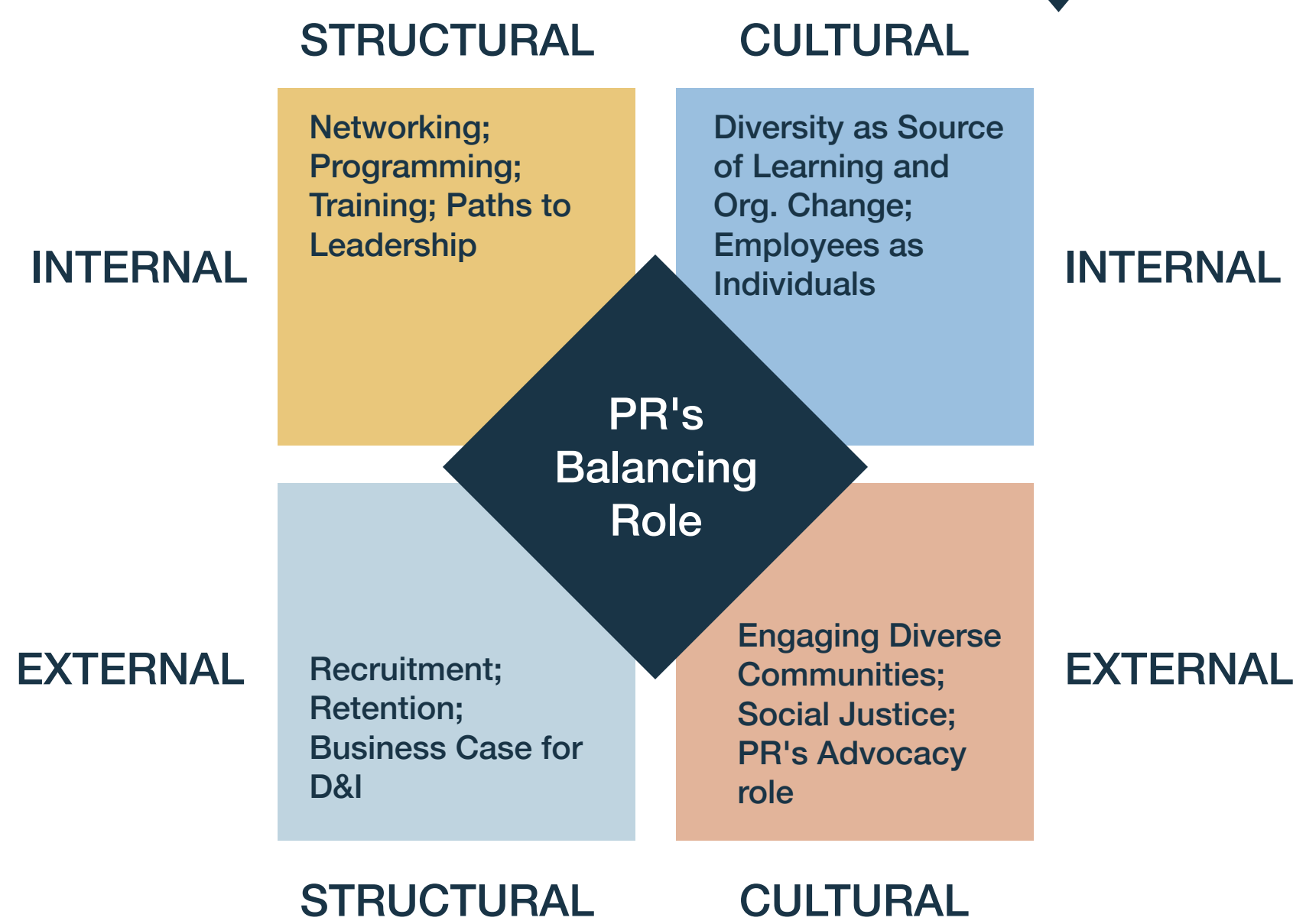
HOW STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION CAN MOBILIZE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS BY REACHING UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS:

- 1 First, public relations research should reflect the importance of knowing the individual – from understanding the intersectionality of targeted publics' identities, to telling the stories of individual experiences.
- 2 Second, new tools and technologies are providing a new, more powerful voice for diverse groups. Not only is it instructive to investigate how organizations advocating for these groups use these new tools, it also is instructive for more-traditional organizations to learn how to listen and engage those diverse voices as appropriate.
- 3 Finally, this research raises new questions regarding communication strategy itself, and the benefits of a public-focused grassroots, ground-up approach to communication.

MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC RELATIONS MANDATES

Focusing on communication that addresses specific internal, external, structural and cultural expectations



BEST PRACTICES IN DIVERSITY



Focus on message development and executive coaching.



Leadership is key. They must reflect diversity, champion diversity efforts, and be visibly involved in the process.



Partner with all functions that play a role in diversity and inclusion (D&I), such as the C-suite and human resources, to truly embed the value of diversity.



Create an inclusive dialogue and maintain that dialog over the long term as part of daily organizational life, approaching diversity as something valued rather than managed.

SOURCES:

Applebaum, L., Walton, F., Southerland, E. (2015). An Examination of Factors Affecting the Success of Underrepresented Groups in the Public Relations Profession. *Public Relations Society of America Foundation*. 1-55. Retrieved from <http://www.prsafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CCNY-Diversity-Study-FINAL.pdf>

Dozier, D. M., Sha, B.-L., & Shen, H. (2013). Why women earn less than men: The cost of gender discrimination in U.S. public relations. *Public Relations Journal*, 7(1), 1-21.

Vardeman-Winter, J. (2011). Confronting whiteness in public relations campaigns and research with women. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 23(4), 412-441.

Read the full paper online at www.InstituteForPR.org



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