Baseline Study on Diversity Segments: Multirace Americans

by

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Published by the Institute for Public Relations
January 2008

Sponsored in part by ConAgra Foods, Inc.

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Source: San Diego State University

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Public relations practitioners and scholars need to consider multirace Americans as an increasingly important public, with identities, motivations, and concerns unique unto themselves. This project benchmarks extant scholarship and government data regarding multirace Americans, and it articulates the implications of the research findings for public relations practice in the areas of long-term, strategic planning; new market opportunities; and respect and sensitivity.

DEFINING RACE AND ETHNICITY

This paper relies on official U.S. government definitions of race and ethnicity (see next section), even though defining race and ethnicity has historically been more difficult than it might appear at first glance. In fact, Lieberman et al. (2004), in their review of anthropological textbooks and research articles in six regions, found that the concept of race was defined differently across the areas studied: "United States, the Spanish language areas, Poland, Europe, Russia, and China" (p. 907). Furthermore, in surveys of anthropologists in the regions under study, the authors found that U.S. and Canadian anthropologists had the highest rate of actually rejecting race as being a concept useful for distinguishing one group of humans from another. These authors note that, historically, the notion of "race" has been grounded in and supported (or not) by both scientific evidence (e.g., physiognomic differences, genetic similarities) and social influences of the day. With this important caveat, I turn to U.S. government definitions of these terms.

U.S. GOVERNMENT DEFINITIONS AND DATA COLLECTION HISTORY

In data collected by the U.S. government, there is only one ethnicity category[1] (Spanish, Hispanic or Latino), but several race categories: White; Black, African American, or Negro; American Indian or Alaska Native (with space to note tribal affiliation); Asian Indian; Japanese; Native Hawaiian; Chinese; Korean; Guamanian or Chamorro; Filipino; Vietnamese; Samoan; Other Asian (with open space to note specifics); Other Pacific Islander (with open space to note specifics); and Some other race (with open space to note specifics) (Jones & Smith, 2001). These data collection categories reflect federal standards established by the Office of Management and Budget in October 1997 (Grieco & Cassidy, 2001).

The U.S. government has collected race data since the first census, conducted in 1790; however, the 2000 census was the first in U.S. history to permit respondents to select more than one racial group with which to identify (Jones & Smith, 2001). The census has collected data on Hispanic origin using a separate question since 1970; prior to that census, information on Hispanic origin was inferred from answers to other questions, such as surname (Guzman, 2001).

CURRENT GOVERNMENT DATA ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

[1] Because there is only one official ethnicity category, some consider the term "multi-ethnic" technically inaccurate; for that reason, this report uses the term "multirace".

Currently, most official government reports of race data combine the 18 race response options into six race categories: White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; and Some other race (Jones & Smith, 2001). Because the 2000 census permitted respondents to select more than one race, these data are now reported as "race alone" and "race alone or in combination with". The "race alone" category gives information on people who selected any single particular racial group and only that particular group. The "race alone or in combination with" category gives information on people who selected any single particular racial group, regardless of what other racial groups they selected (i.e., regardless of whether that race was selected alone or selected in combination with other races). The six race categories shown as "race alone" plus a seventh category of "two or more races" would total the entire U.S. population (Grieco & Cassidy, 2001). The seventh group of people reporting "two or more races" would constitute multirace Americans.

As one example, the author of this report is Asian American, her husband is White, and their children are biracial. A census of this household would indicate the following information: White (race alone): 1; White (race alone or in combination with): 3; Asian (race alone): 1; and Asian (race alone or in combination with): 3. Alternatively, race data on this household could be shown this way: White alone: 1; Asian alone: 1; and Two or more races: 2.

Thus, current government race data, rather than providing specific numbers or percentages, may provide a range of numbers or percentages about a particular racial group, with the "race alone" category indicating the minimum numbers/percentages of people claiming that race and the "race alone or in combination with" indicating the maximum/percentages numbers of people claiming that race.

Of course, the actual number of multirace Americans, of whatever combination, is dependent on individuals actually claiming that they belong to more than one race. Some individuals, for whatever reason, may opt out of indicating their affiliation with particular groups. Others may choose to claim an additional identity that they previously had not been permitted to assert (e.g., the numbers of Americans claiming American Indian heritage increased dramatically with multiple-race reporting in the 2000 census). At the end of the day, public relations practitioners, and anyone else using census or other race data, should remember that these numbers are based on the self-identification of respondents.

MULTIRACE AMERICANS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Overview. In the 2000 census, 2.4% of American residents (or more than 6.8 million people) reported more than one race. In other words, more than 6.8 million residents could be grouped in the "two or more races" category, the seventh race group discussed above. Of all those residents reporting more than one race, 32.6% were Hispanic or Latino (2.2 million people) and 67.4% were not Hispanic or Latino (4.6 million people) (Jones & Smith, 2001).

Geographic Location. Census data indicate that 40% of multirace Americans lived in the West, with 27% living in the South, 18% living in the Northeast, and 15% living in the Midwest. The West had not only the highest number of residents reporting more than one race, but also the highest proportion of multirace residents, at 4.3% , followed by 2.3% of residents in the Northeast, 1.8% of residents in the South, and 1.6% of residents in the Midwest. About two-thirds of multirace Americans (64%) lived in one the following states:

California, New York, Texas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, Michigan, and Ohio (listed in descending order by population of multirace residents) (Jones & Smith, 2001).

Proportion of Specific Races Reporting Multirace: Of the six racial categories, Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders had the highest proportion (54.4%) reporting more than one race; the remaining 45.6% of Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders would have reported being that race alone. Put another way, more than one in two Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders were multiracial. Proportions of specific race groups reporting being multiracial were, in descending order, Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians/Alaska Natives (39.9%), Some other race (17.1%); Asians (13.9%); Blacks/African Americans (4.8%); and Whites (2.5%) (Jones & Smith, 2001).

Races Reported by Multirace Americans: Considering multirace Americans as a group, 80.1% reported being White; 46.3% reported being Some other race; 25.8% reported being Black or African American; 24.3% reported being Asian; 24.1% reported being American Indian and Alaskan Native; and 7.0% reported being Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (Jones & Smith, 2001).

Ages of Multirace Americans: According to Jones & Smith (2001), "people who reported more than one race were more likely to be under age 18 than those reporting only one race" (p. 9). Specifically, 42% of multirace Americans were under age 18, compared to 25% of single race Americans. This pattern holds for both Hispanics and non-Hispanics (Jones & Smith, 2001).

DEVELOPING A MULTIRACE IDENTITY

Nearly 1,000 articles dealing with racial identity development were found in Eric/FirstSearch, the primary indexing tool for publications in education and child development[2]. Of those articles, very few actually dealt with identity development within multiracial individuals. Traditionally, the most commonly studied form of "multiraciality" in the literature is actually biraciality, specifically, of individuals who are both Black and White. Many identity development models seek to explain how biracial individuals develop their identities (e.g., Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990). These efforts usually examine identity development in children, and they also tend to emphasize one's acceptance of all of his or her racial identities as being the "end" of identity "development" (Root, 1999).

Miville, Constantine, Baysden, and So-Lloyd (2005) examined the identity development of college students who were either multiracial or biracial (besides Black/White biracial), and they found that this process in some ways mirrored Black/White biracial identity development processes and in other ways deviated from them. For example, the identity

[2] Related literature that this paper did not review includes research on interracial relationships and marriages, transracial adoptions, racial identity development in single-race individuals, bi- or multi-lingual education, the development of children's attitudes toward race, and the interactions of mono-racial groups in educational settings and other settings.

development process for multiracial youth tends to be more complex than for monoracial youth (Schwartz, 1998). Also, identification with being "multiracial" was complicated by the dearth of a multiracial community with which to identity (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005). Indeed, the perceived exclusion from standard race categories, as well as by monoracial individuals, is a recurrent theme in the research on mulitaciality and biraciality (Root, 1997; Renn, 1999; Schwartz, 1998; Steel & Valentine, 1995; Sullivan, 1998; Wardle, 200).

However, despite anecdotal and literary evidence about the challenges of growing up multiracial (e.g., Gartenberg, 1995; Motoyoshi, 1990; Root, 1996), a review of both qualitative and quantitative empirical research that examined multiracial individuals indicated that these persons are no less psychologically well-adjusted than persons who are monoracial (Shih & Sanchez, 2005).

AVOWING A MULTIRACE IDENTITY

In research on identity, scholars note that identities may be avowed or ascribed (Collier, 1994, 2003). Avowed identities are those that people claim and assert for themselves, whereas ascribed identities are those that people assign to others. For example, some multirace individuals avow identities from a variety of racial groups, but others may ascribe to them a single-race identity based on some supposedly "identifying" characteristic, such as hair or skin color. This distinction between identity that is claimed by oneself as opposed to assigned by others is very important in the literature as a whole.

In fact, Kahn and Denmon (1997), offering an historical account (1890-1995) of multiracial identity in social science research, noted that the emphasis in scholarship has shifted away from researchers' observations of people's behaviors (i.e., ascribed identities), to now focus on multiracial persons' self-reports of behaviors (i.e., avowed identities). Similarly, the literature has moved away from the notion of the inferiority or marginality of multiracial individuals; instead, research now explores the lived experiences of multiracial individuals, in their own words.

Yet, the extent to which individuals can avow all the identities that they claim often is limited by options they are given, for example, on school or government paperwork. In many parts of California and most other states, parents completing school information forms on their children are asked to select only one racial category for each child. As discussed earlier, the 2000 census was the first in the history of the United States to permit respondents to select more than one racial category with which to identify.

Addressing the issue of whether to select one or more racial categories for multiracial persons, Chiong (1998) recommends that school forms include a category for "multirace," arguing that the lack of such a category forces children to select one racial group, which in turn makes multiracial children invisible to educators and education policy makers. On the other hand, Renn (2000) argues against identifying "multiraciality" as a distinct racial category; in her view, doing so serves to reinforce the notion of non-multiracial people as being "pure" in terms of their racial background, which in turn reinforces the notion of race as an objective, as opposed to social, construction.

With regards to the preferences of multiracial individuals themselves, studies show that multirace Americans desire the opportunity to claim being "multiracial", as well as the opportunity to identify specific race groups with which they identify (Johnson, et al., 1997;

Miville, et al., 2005; Renn, 1998). However, in some cases, multiracial individuals reported social pressure to select only a single race with which to identify (Herman, 2004; Miville, et al., 2005; Renn, 1998; Suyemoto, 2004). Finally, there are those multiracial individual who "opt out"; that is, they refuse to identify with any race at all, preferring instead to deconstruct the very notion of race (Renn, 1998).

Additional research indicates that multiracial identification – or the avowing of multiracial identities – is fluid over time, with adolescents either adding racial categories or subtracting them from their identities; reports of these processes of "racial diversification" or "racial consolidation" are four times more common than reports of consistent multiracial identities over time (Hitlin, Brown, & Elder, 2006). Furthermore, multiracial adolescents from different racial backgrounds report differences in ethnic identity, self-esteem, and perceptions of ethnic discrimination (Herman, 2004). In other words, "multiracial" is not an internally homogenous label, and the experiences of multiracial people from one set of racial backgrounds may well be different from those of multiracial people from a different collection of racial backgrounds.

AFFINITY GROUPS FOR MULTIRACE AMERICANS

One manner in which people may avow a multiracial identity is to join with others that they perceive to be similar to themselves. Dozens of affinity groups exist for multiracial Americans, at national, state, and local levels; Bruno (2000) offers a review of websites dealing with multiracial issues. This section discusses only some of the more prominent national organizations, with "prominence" being rather informally determined by the numbers of references to an organization from the websites of similar organizations. The review also includes only those groups with active sites (updated in 2007). Furthermore, this research reviewed only formally established organizations, as opposed to informally established groups such as discussion forums, yahoogroups, online chat rooms, etc.

Association of Multi-Ethnic Americans (AMEA) (www.ameasite.org). An international, non-profit organization based in California, the AMEA is "dedicated to advocacy, education and collaboration on behalf of the multiethnic, multiracial and transracial adoption community." The AMEA served on the 2000 census advisory committee as the only multiracial advocacy group that is federally recognized. It was established in 1988. According to the group's website, the organization was "instrumental" in the decision of the Office of Management and Budget to permit census respondents to self-identify as being more than one race. The organization offers both individual and family memberships, as well as institutional/ organizational affiliate memberships.

Center for the Study of Biracial Children (http://csbchome.org). Based in Denver, this organization "produces and disseminates materials for and about interracial families and biracial children . . . . Its primary mission is to advocate for the rights of interracial families, biracial children, and multiracial people." (n.p.). The organization also offers training and consulting on multiraciality/ biraciality, often supporting university scholars and graduate students studying biracial children. The website also offers a series of first-person articles by the executive director, addressing various issues related to the multirace population, such as myths and realities about biracial identity development, raising successful multiracial children, and "why diversity experts hate the multicultural movement."
IPride (www.ipride.org). As explained on its website, "iPride's mission is to cultivate positive identity formation in children who are of more than one racial or ethnic heritage and/or who have been transracially adopted." The organization focuses on multirace families

(i.e., families in which the parents are from different racial backgrounds and thus have bi- or multirace children, as well as families in which parents of one race have adopted children from another). Based in San Francisco/Berkeley, the organization offers playgroups, support group meetings, family activity meetings, and summer day camps for multirace children. iPride's Multiethnic Education Program (www.multiethniceducation.org) also provides multicultural training for families and educators.

MAVIN Foundation (http://www.mavin.net). Founded in 1998 and based in Seattle, this organization serves to "explore the experiences of mixed heritage people, transracial adoptees, interracial relationships and multiracial families." The organization also supports the right of mixed-race individuals to avow their own identities, and it advocates for the social recognition of the complexities of racial identity. MAVIN offers speakers, a magazine "celebrating the mixed race experience," a registration project for mixed-race bone marrow donors, a student internship program, assistance in the establishment of college or community groups for mixed-race people, and various other services.

The Mixed Heritage Center (http://www.mixedheritagecenter.org). A joint project of the Association of MultiEthnic Americans and the MAVIN Foundation, this website (in beta testing as of October 16, 2007) will be a national clearinghouse for information related to mixed heritage and transracial adoption issues.

The Multiracial Activist (www.multiracial.com). According to its website, "the Multiracial Activist is a libertarian oriented activist journal covering social and civil liberties issues of interest to individuals who perceive themselves to be "biracial" or "multiracial," "interracial" couples/families and "transracial" adoptees." Part advocacy group and part resource, the organization surrounding the journal takes policy positions, writes letters to elected officials, hosts discussion forms, and offers resources such as newsletters, blogs, lists of materials (e.g., books, essays, poems) "of interest to interracial families, multiracial individuals and transracial adoptees". The organization advocates individuals' rights to "self-identify in any racial category", as well as the right to "shed 'race' as an identity altogether".

The Topaz Club (www.thetopazclub.com). An affiliate organization of the AMEA, the Topaz Club was founded in January 2004 as a dues-free, professional and social networking group for multirace women of African/African-American heritage. Although group members do meet in person for social activities, the group describes itself as being "an online-based social/support sisterhood".

Other National Organizations: A Place For Us/National; The Amegroid Society of America; Association of Southern Métis, Inc.; Bridge Communications, Inc.; Hapa Issues Forum; My Shoes; Metis Nation of the United States; Mixed Student Resources; Project RACE (on hiatus pending volunteer re-organization); Swirl, Inc.; The Multiracial Family Center.

Regional organizations: Biracial Family Network, Inc. (Chicago); Hip Multicultural Moms of Central Ohio; Interracial Family Circle (Washington, D.C.); Multiracial Americans of Southern California.

Organizations based on specific races: Asian Nation; Black Indians & Inter-Tribal Native Americans Association; Center for the Study of White American Culture; Jewish Multiracial Network; National Association of Black & White Men Together (NABWMT).

MULTIRACE AMERICANS AND THE U.S. MEDIA (Popular Culture and News Media)

A search[3] for articles about multiraciality and the media yielded very little information, suggesting that research in this area is overdue. In the rare article that is relevant to the study of multiraciality as portrayed in popular U.S. culture, Nakamura (2007) discusses the website Mixedfolks.com, which she argues "outs" multiracial celebrities by revealing the non-White dimensions of their heritage. This researcher notes that revealing stars' multiraciality online serves both to educate White Americans about "hidden" multiraciality and to offer multirace Americans role models in the form of mixed-race stars who often are assumed to be completely White. Nakamura also cites a 2004 article posted on bet.com, in which author James Hill contends that, when faced with multiracial celebrities, White audiences fail to see beyond the White dimension of these individuals' identities, whereas non-White audience often connect with those same non-White dimensions.

Indeed, this contention – that multiraciality is hidden from those in the dominant culture (i.e., Whites) – may explain why mass media usually fail to mention multiraciality as a demographic category. With the possible exception of Tiger Woods, who from the start of his celebrity-hood has insisted vocally that he is "Cablinasian" – Caucasian, Black, and Asian – most multiracial celebrities are identified in the popular media as being either of their "minority" heritage (perhaps reflective of the "one-drop rule" that identified African Americans in the Old South) or as being completely "White" (and thus perhaps reflective of the old notion of "passing," or hiding the non-White aspects of one's identity so as to be accepted by White society). A current example is the media coverage of biracial presidential aspirant Barack Obama, with most commentators analyzing the impact of his "Blackness" on the campaign (even though Obama's mother is White), as opposed to discussing the impact of his biraciality.

Other scholarly work in the area of multiraciality and the U.S. media does not examine multiracial individuals. Rather, this research examines U.S. cultural diversity and how American mass media reinforce prevailing notions of White domination over minority cultures (cf. Bourgeois, 1992; Dates, 1991). Furthermore, in their defining of "minority cultures" as being each monoracial in themselves, these researchers demonstrate how multiracial Americans continue to be ignored in mass media scholarship. Similarly, the sole research paper on journalism and the idea of "multirace" focuses on monoracial minority journalists and their newsroom experiences (cf. Johnston & Flamiano, 2003).

Finally, only one media industry article mentions multiracial Americans: Burrell (2000) notes that an increasing number of Americans no longer fit in traditional demographic categories, arguing that advertising agencies need to segment their audiences using more nuanced tools that will allow for individual consumers to identify their own identities, often via the use of niche media.

One potentially good resource for the examination of race and popular culture is Racialious.com, formerly Mixed Media Watch. This online resource offers bloggers

[3] Out of 13 articles found using EbscoHost on October 17, 2007, nearly half (six) dealt with multiraciality in the media coverage of non-U.S. issues, related to domestic politics in Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa – all nations that are "multirace" in the sense of having citizens from various racial backgrounds, but not germane to the focus of this report.

commenting on, among other topics, the popular media representations of multiracial people. See www.racialicious.com for most recent blogs and www.mixedmediawatch.com for blog archives.

IMPLICATIONS OF MULTIRACE AMERICA FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

Since multirace Americans represent a relatively small segment of the U.S. population, public relations practitioners may be tempted to ignore the needs of this demographic, especially in light of other, larger groups (e.g., Hispanics) whose influence – political, financial, etc. – is already being felt in many parts of the country. Nevertheless, this paper posits that multirace Americans may pose three important considerations for public relations practice, in the areas of long-term, strategic planning; niche market opportunities in media, business, and education; and respect and sensitivity.

Long-term, strategic planning. With respect to long-term strategic planning for organizations and their stakeholders, we note that multirace Americans are today not only among the youngest demographic groups in the country, but also one of the fastest-growing. Thus, it is only a matter of time before multirace Americans will rise to the forefront of the consciousness of U.S. businesses. Multirace Americans have implications for the long-term, strategic planning of organizations with respect to public relations research, issues management, and the implementation of official U.S. census categories for organizations receiving federal funds.

- Public Relations Research. For strategic planning in public relations, the long-term rise of multirace Americans suggests the need for organizations to conduct more research in general on this potential public. In particular, public relations practitioners need to encourage their organizations to fund and undertake more sophisticated methods to segment organizational stakeholders, methods that go beyond traditional demographic categories. In that effort, organizations should consider individuals' avowed identities and ascribed identities. In other words, rather than merely assigning identities to their stakeholders, organizations must do the research to determine the myriad ways in which those stakeholders identity themselves, as well as which identities may be more salient in a particular instance of organization-public communication.
- Issues Management. Also along the lines of long-term, strategic planning, public relations practitioners must engage in issues management, monitoring potential concerns of multirace Americans and dealing with them proactively to enhance or protect organization-public relationships. As the relatively young cohort of multirace Americans come into their own as adults, they are likely to engage in increased activism, putting pressure on organizations to acknowledge and respond to this segment of the population. As the majority of multirace Americans come from younger generations, this phenomenon is particularly significant for the future of American businesses, and thus issues management should be part of organizations' long-term strategic planning efforts with respect to multirace Americans.
- Public Affairs and Government Relations. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget requires that organizations receiving federal government funds now use the race and ethnicity categories of the 2000 census. As this federal mandate diffuses through U.S. businesses in the long-term, public relations practitioners can help their organizations to understand the official census demographic categories, which permit the identification of multirace individuals.

Niche market opportunities. Like other "minority" groups, multirace Americans offer businesses some niche market opportunities, in particular with respect to media, businesses, and education.

- Niche Media. Multirace Americans already have some niche media serving their needs, with regards to cultural identity, political recognition, and social support. Public relations practitioners should incorporate some of these niche media as part of their regular environmental scanning process. Activism often takes only a single individual with a media platform (be this a blog, a website, or a satellite radio station) to spur larger groups to speak out in support of or against an issue or an organization. Also, public relations practitioners should familiar themselves with such niche media in the event that they need a specialized channel of communication to reach multirace Americans.
- New Business Opportunities. The public relations industry also might watch for the creation of firms and other organizations to fill the niche of catering to multiracial Americans and their needs. Independent practitioners are the fastest-growing segment of the Public Relations Society of America, and it's possible that some solo practitioners have found a niche for themselves in reaching out to multirace Americans, much as many minority practitioners focus on minority accounts or clients. Most minority-owned firms in public relations appear to focus on traditional minority groups, but as multirace Americans gain in numbers and clout, closer attention will be paid to their needs not only by the public relations industry, but others as well.
- Public Relations Pedagogy. Multirace Americans also represent a "new business" opportunity for educators striving to recruit diverse students to our field. Public relations professors, especially those in geographic regions with relatively high percentages of multirace individuals, need to acknowledge multirace groups as a type of "diversity" public, with unique implications for public relations practice. Such recognition may encourage multiracial students to pursue public relations as a major and/or career field, thereby helping to address the continuing dearth of minorities in public relations practice, compared to their proportion in the U.S. population.

Respect & sensitivity. As this report has shown, many multirace Americans feel passionately about being members of more than one cultural group. Like any other demographic group grounded in race and ethnicity, many multirace Americans wish to feel accepted for who they are, in all their uniqueness, as well as in their Americanness. Yet, other multirace Americans reject racial or ethnic labels altogether, and they wish that the rest of U.S. society would join them in getting past an individual's racial background. This paradox, combined with the usual emotional and historical dimensions of race and ethnicity in this country, suggests the importance of respect and sensitivity as public relations practitioners develop communication messages and vehicles, select and train organizational spokespersons, and assist with employee communication efforts.

- Communication Messages and Vehicles. Given the sensitivities involved with both the labeling and self-identification of multirace Americans, public relations practitioners, in their effort to reach out to these organizational stakeholders, must demonstrate sensitivity to their issues and concerns. Advertising and publicity materials that portray organizational representatives, consumers, or other stakeholders need to be inclusive in their depictions of racial and ethnic groups.
- Organizational Identity and Representation. As discussed earlier, White audiences often see only the Whiteness of multiracial individuals, whereas monoracial and multiracial minorities focus on the minority identities of multiracial individuals.

For public relations, this phenomenon suggests that even more sensitivity is needed in the communication process when considering the appropriate "face" or "voice" for the organization as spokesperson in media relations. We must acknowledge that the official organizational representative may not only be seen as embodying the organization, but also as representing a cultural group, whether he/she wishes to or not.

- Employee Communication. As increasing numbers of young multirace Americans move into the workforce, organizations must be sensitive to their desire to acknowledge their multiple identities or to reject current race and ethnicity labels altogether. For human resources personnel, the influx of multirace Americans into the working world suggests the need to revamp personnel materials. For example, forms and other paperwork should offer options to acknowledge the multiraciality of employees, so that all dimensions of employees' cultural backgrounds can be articulated. With respect to employee communication, sensitivity also is needed with regards to depictions and descriptions of employees in organizational literature. Public relations practitioners, in the effort to reach multirace employees, might also extend employee affinity groups to include the creation of support systems for multiracial individuals.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Multirace Americans, at this point in time, "fly under the radar" of most organizations and thus of most public relations practitioners. Given their relatively small numbers in the general U.S. population and the fact that any count of their numbers is grounded in self-identification, this lack of attention is understandable. Yet, for the longer-term benefit of public relations and of the organizations that our function serves, we should plan now for the implications of this growing demographic of Americans.

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