

Public Relations for Social Responsibility

Communicating Responsible Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Series Editor: Donnalyn Pompper

This *Communicating Responsible Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* series brings together leading scholars of public relations, communication management, (corporate) social responsibility, sustainability, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Together, we offer critique and map new arenas for discovery in an effort to advance a collective goal of eliminating bias/discrimination from organizations and other public spaces. Simultaneously, we amplify the virtues of equity and respect among humans and for all species.

Despite nearly two decades of public relations theory building and formal study about the importance of DEI, the number of public relations practitioners who are not male or Caucasian/White has not grown in meaningful ways and research directions seem to have hit a wall. Examining public relations as a “responsibility” provides new avenues for critiquing ways power operates in and through public relations work. This series adds a much-needed contribution to global understanding of intersections among DEI with social responsibility to enable public relations practitioners and organizations (corporations and nonprofits) to take lip service to the next level. To be authentic, DEI must be a component of social responsibility and sustainability. And the public relations practitioner, as insider-activist and ethics guardian, is the logical point person to infuse DEI thinking in policies, decision-making, and everyday life throughout organizations.

Public Relations for Social Responsibility: Affirming DEI Commitment with Action

EDITED BY

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Pompper has won two national book awards: the 2015 *PRIDE Book Award for Innovation, Development, and Educational Achievement in Public Relations* from the Public Relations Division of the National Communication Association for *Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Public Relations: Negotiating Multiple Complex Challenges* (2015, Routledge); and the 2014 *Top Book Award* from the Organizational Communication Division of the National Communication Association for *Practical and Theoretical Implications of Successfully Doing Difference in Organizations* (2014, Emerald Publishing). In addition, Pompper has published extensively in peer-reviewed academic journals including *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, *Mass Communication and Society*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Public Relations Review*, *The Howard Journal of Communications*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, and many others. She is an editorial board member for four top public relations research journals and six other academic journals.

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Preface

This edited collection of internationally recognized authors sets the tone for the new *Intersections of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion with Public Relations as Social Responsibility* series by Emerald Publishing. It is the first book series to examine intersections of public relations (PR), corporate social responsibility (CSR), and diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI). Importantly, authors draw from numerous theory streams and formal research methods to support ongoing theory building and ideas for practical application that are needed to bring deeper understanding to key intersections as they play out in PR practice and theory building.

This group of leading scholars of PR, communication management, social responsibility, sustainability, and DEI offer critique and map new arenas for discovery. Our overall goal is to eliminate bias/discrimination from organizations and other public spaces and to amplify the virtues of equality and respect across all species. The set of authors represented in this edited collection are shaped by worldviews of their homes in Austria, Denmark, Ghana, Senegal, Turkey, and the United States.

The timing for this first book in the series is particularly relevant. Globally, macroaggressions and hate crimes persist, as violence against immigrants, girls, women, African Americans, Muslims, Jews, and the LGBTQ community members has risen significantly in the United States (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Despite decades of PR theory building and formal study about the importance of DEI, the number of PR practitioners who are not male or Caucasian/White have not grown in meaningful ways and research directions seem to have hit a wall. Examining PR as a “responsibility” provides new avenues for critiquing ways power operates in and through PR work. This book series will add a much-needed contribution to global understanding of intersections among DEI with social responsibility and sustainability to enable PR practitioners and organizations (corporations *and* nonprofits) to take lip service to the next level. To be authentic, DEI must be a component of social responsibility and sustainability. The PR practitioner, as insider-activist and ethics guardian, is the logical point person to infuse DEI thinking in policies, decision-making, and everyday life throughout organizations and across stakeholder communities.

How This Book Is Organized

Public Relations for Social Responsibility: Affirming DEI Commitment with Action features three units of 13 chapters. **Unit I: Legal and Economic Frameworks Thwarting Authentic Social Responsibility and DEI**, **Unit II: Unique Social Responsibility Style of Women and People of Color Managing Organizations**, and **Unit III: Expanding Social Responsibility Critique to Include New Kinds of Stakeholders When Considering DEI**.

In Unit I, three chapters address shortcomings of *business as usual* in the United States. This unit offers critique and tangible examples of ways that legal structures and capitalism support hegemony which prevents an authentic embrace of DEI and action. Nneka Logan recommends reversal of decades of organizational homophily and acknowledging benefits gained from a history of discrimination against people of color. Moronke Oshin-Martin underscores exceptional shortcomings of effectively dealing with COVID-19 crises in the summer of 2020, especially as these impact communities of color. Susan Grantham and Edward T. Vieira, Jr. put the pharmaceutical industry's social responsibility reports under the microscope to recommend a path forward for improving communication strategies regarding DEI commitment.

Unit II offers successful outcomes of social responsibility and PR interplay as evidenced by social identity dimension intersections among organizational leadership, as well as critique of failed DEI efforts. First up, my research with Tugce Ertem-Eray, Eric Adae, Elinam Amevor, Layire Diop, and Samantha Nadel uncovered a small handful of Fortune 500 companies that have achieved 50-50% gender equity on their board of directors and we critique the practice of ethnic tokenism when too few people of color serve on multiple boards. Michelle T. Violanti addresses some of the many shortcomings associated with lacking DEI in organizations, especially workplace bullying and (irr)esponsible leadership. Eric Kwame Adae examines philosophical influences on CEO activism in Ghana in western Africa.

Unit III breaks entirely new ground by reconceptualizing social responsibility beyond stakeholder groups traditionally addressed by PR theorists. Debra Mer-skin writes about the importance of considering animals as stakeholders. Constance E. Kampf and Oludotun Kayode Fashakin offer artificial intelligence (AI) as a new framework for considering ethics and DEI.

Finally, Unit IV offers new paths for helping PR practitioners move forward to authentically navigate organizations toward authentic DEI. To begin, Richard Waters, Zifei Fay Chen, and Lorena Gomez-Barris invite practitioners to reconsider traditional campaign management tools by offering a new mindset. Alexander V. Laskin and Katie Kresic recommend *inclusion* as a CSR component and brand connection strategy. Antioaneta M. Vanc and Katie M. Masler use social anchor theory to explore community relations among professional sports organizations. Ann D. Jabro offers a case study about developing a community advisory council for emergency planning in a socioeconomically challenged area. Finally, Franzisca Weder advocates for the transformative potential of PR for social change.

Meeting Short-Term Goals and Objectives of the Series

This edited collected addresses a primary goal of the new series, *Intersections of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion with Public Relations as Social Responsibility*, by following up on the commitment of 200 CEOs who declared that “shareholder value” is no longer their primary concern, but that it is “[i]nvesting in employees, delivering value to customers, dealing ethically with suppliers and supporting outside communities” (Fitzgerald, 2019). The Business Roundtable issued this new definition of the “purpose of a corporation” and in a public “statement on the purpose of a corporation” included this language: “We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect” (Fitzgerald, 2019). Given this directive at the forefront of global business goals, case studies of successes and critique of failures offer source material for this series.

This first installment in the series also explores industry-identified trends related to social responsibility and explores ways to link these to organizations’ DEI commitments – by offering critique of barriers to making legal protections against discrimination (where they exist) a reality globally.

Sincere Gratitude

I am grateful to many who supported this project, including external reviewers who gave of their time when there was too little of it to go around. I appreciate Endowed Chair in Public Relations funding that enables me to purchase books and travel to conferences, so I especially thank the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon. Big thank-you to graduate students who participated in my corporate social responsibility course, showing overwhelming enthusiasm and hunger for knowledge in this area when I first arrived in Oregon. Last, but by no means least, I offer sincere thanks to Niall Kennedy, senior publisher, and Sophie Barr, content editor, at Emerald Group Publishing Limited – as well as the Emerald production staff and anonymous reviewers.

Donnalyn Pompper, Editor
*Intersections of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion with Public
Relations as Social Responsibility Series*

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