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Subject: Diversity & Inclusion: What's the Difference? by Young & Rubicam Brands

Diversity & Inclusion: What's the Difference?

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*Young & Rubicam Brands is the sponsor of the **Diversity Section** of our 2009/2010 Source Book of Multicultural Experts. The Source Book will be available August 1, 2009.*

Creating a diverse workplace is the stated goal of those companies, which are attempting to advantageously position themselves in a global marketplace. *Diversity* involves the recruitment and retention of a staff from a wide array of social, cultural, and national backgrounds. This diverse staff gives the employer the widest possible talent pool while simultaneously promoting its access to various markets across the globe.

Inclusion goes beyond diversity in that inclusiveness involves making the diverse staff an integral part of all operations. Inclusiveness means that the corporate leaders have realized that maintaining an edge requires a presence in all markets and a corporate presentation that appeals to all markets.

Diversity has been seen as just a 'numbers game,' having a few people of different ethnic backgrounds to allay fears of discriminatory practices. And indeed more people from historically excluded backgrounds have been hired into corporations large and small over the past three decades. The American workplace has become more diverse. However, retention and advancement in the workplace for minorities has been lagging far behind the rates of hire.

What is needed now is a game plan to turn diversity into inclusion. We suggest several strategies below:

- Survey employees to better understand what motivates those who succeed in the present corporate culture.
- Promote informal lines of communication (lunches, off site gatherings, etc.) to increase comfort levels.
- Have employees create a 'career flight plan' and have managers respond to them on how they will help them reach their desired destinations.

- Engage in company-wide diversity and inclusion training initiatives for managers; everyone should know why diversity and inclusion are important to the future of the company.
- Initiate mentorship programs to promote personal engagement and provide links to the corporate social network.
- Sponsor employee teach-ins in which employees from different backgrounds describe and explain their experiences and how they relate to the goals of the company; field trips to community events, schools and universities might also be considered.

Finally, what does it take to successfully diversify and bring about inclusion in your company? The same thing it takes to make any business enterprise a long-term success story. Creating vibrant, mutually beneficial working relationships; relationships in which people feel that they are getting from it as much or more than they give to it. The future prosperity of any business in today's globally connected marketplace absolutely requires a wide network of strong relationships; people who count on you for high quality services and on whom you can count on for resources. A diverse and inclusive workplace maximizes the potential for making the strongest possible and widest array of business relationships.

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