

Introduction

FleishmanHillard (FH) is a public relations and marketing agency based in St. Louis, Missouri, with over 85 offices in 30 countries. FH was founded in 1946 by Alfred Fleishman and Bob Hillard and is ran today by President and CEO, John Saunders. FH has been named PRWeek's inaugural Global Agency of the Year, delivers on the power of true, reflecting the firm's high values, and unique ability to guide clients through a world demanding unprecedented authenticity and transparency. Their areas of expertise are consumer products & services, digital & social, media relations, public affairs, research & analytics, strategic integration, technology. Some of their famous clients include EA Sports, Chevrolet (their [#TechnologyAndStuff](#) campaign was awesome!), Levi Jeans (another cool campaign), Olay, AT&T, CitiBank, Embassy of Turkey in Washington, Barnes & Noble, Bayer Healthcare, etc. (fleishmanhillard.com).

Values

FH has shown that it can be a champion and supporter for all. The firm wants to help many different organizations and recognizes those that are in need of sincere, genuine advocacy. For example, FH has worked with Olay, as well as the Embassy of Turkey -- two very diverse clients -- both in need of help. [Olay wanted to inspire women](#) in Thailand to be more confident in their appearances, and FH helped the beauty brand create a campaign to make this happen. [The Embassy of Turkey to the United States](#) enlisted FH to help enhance and clarify Turkey's foreign policy objectives and actions with U.S. policy leaders and to foster a better public understanding of Turkey-related issues. FH also helped to promote Turkey's culture within in the U.S. (fleishmanhillard.com).

Everyone needs to be heard and to find a place in this world. The people at FH know this and are committed to clearing up misunderstanding and miscommunication, and want to create common ground among a variety of groups. Finally, FH's CEO, John Saunders, was quoted on the company's website stating,

“At the core of Fleishman Hillard’s philosophy is *the power of true*. True speaks to who we are and how we work every day. The values and principles articulated in our philosophy include respect and teamwork, ethical behavior and transparent business practices, and relationship-driven client service that achieves meaningful results. Our values unite FleishmanHillard into a talented and committed team working across continents and cultures on behalf of our clients”
(fleishmanhillard.com).

FH has shown that it possesses all six of the professional values found in the PRSA Code of Ethics. The people at FH provide *advocacy* for their clients and for many diversity groups. They show *honesty* in their work and with their clientele. They have the *expertise* to handle every project sent their way and understand a variety of industries. They have *independence* and are accountable for their actions. They have *loyalty* to the people they associate with, and show *fairness* to them. To reiterate, the firm has done work for many different clients. And aside from its clientele, FH has programs in place to educate the public and bring more awareness to the public eye.

Overview of the Issue

Diversity represents the range of human differences while inclusion “involves the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of our diversity, where each person is valued, respected and supported...in order to leverage talent and foster both individual and organizational excellence” (Boston College). Diversity and inclusion (D&I) is not only something to be encouraged in the PRAD industries, it represents an ethical dilemma. An industry leader offered the following observation, “One of the most compelling ethical issues is diversity, and we’re not making enough progress there. If anything, we’re regressing...Our industry is not accurately representing the makeup of the U.S. population. We’re not creating enough opportunities for minorities” (Drumwright & Murphy, p. 90). A study on the D&I efforts of Arthur W. Page Society members by the Plank Center found that “About 53% of the 80 organizations reported dissatisfaction with the level of diversity in their organization” (Plank p. 1). In terms of this week’s

readings, terms like *diversity, race, ethnicity, gender*, etc. are not found in either the PRSA's code of ethics or the advertising ethics document, which shows that “diversity and inclusion” is not professionally accepted as an ethical issue.

Rochelle Newman-Carrasco wrote an article for *Ad Age* titled, “Why the Ad Industry’s Diversity Strategy Needs a New Brief” in which she argued that, in term of diversity, “Communities of “others” get aggregated or bucketed under the diversity umbrella while the existing power structure remains intact” (*Ad Age* 2016). She goes on to say that with inclusion, it’s “inclusion into pre-existing structures with pre-existing rules written by -- well, you know -- dominant culture decision makers. Without disruption there can be no real inclusion. Change, by definition, requires creating a new system.” In terms of PR, Tyrus B. Sturgis wrote about the problem with diversity in the industry for *PR SAY*. The author acknowledges that “PR practitioners are among the most skilled communicators in the world” and yet he argues that “words alone appear to constitute the vast majority of efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity in the PR industry” (*PR SAY* 2015). He calls out the industry while challenging PR practitioners, in essence, to *walk the walk*. He explains:

“Currently, we have done more message development than anything else. Perhaps we are victims of our own craft, accustomed to building awareness and increasing desire but rarely responsible for closing the sale. That responsibility is usually left for the client. When it comes to diversity in our field, however, we are the clients. It is our responsibility to close the sale” (*PR SAY* 2015).

In *PR Week*, Diana Bradley highlighted a PRSA survey of young U.S. PR practitioners of color along with industry employers. The author points out that survey participants agreed that the industry “has taken steps to improve inclusion in the workplace” but that once they are recruited they “express concern about a lack of support, compounded by perceived biases they believe are negatively impacting their careers” (*PR Week* 2015). Bradley also spoke to a leader of *ColorComm*, an organization supporting women of color in communications fields, who explained that “‘Sometimes [employers] will look around and say, ‘I see multicultural people here, so we are doing a good job,’” says Wesley Wilson. Yet she adds that while it is common to see minorities in junior PR roles, the same level of diversity is not found at the VP level and above” (*PR Week* 2015).

Finally, some organizations take on challenges of D&I as their sole purpose. The *3% Conference* argues that diversity and inclusion should be considered in terms of the leadership positions. The organization was launched in 2012 to tackle the statistic that only 3% of Creative Directors were women (www.3percentconf.com). D&I is not only about creating a diverse workforce, but also assessing who is directing these organizations and asking what groups hold the most power.

Addressing the Central Question

Diversity and inclusion seem to run through FH's veins. As previously mentioned, FH has produced campaigns for Olay and the Embassy of Turkey in the U.S. with the sole purpose to promote diversity and inclusivity. It has done so with other clients as well. Additionally, FH's website is infused with D&I messaging. This includes [*The Power of True*](#), but there are also places on the FH website that show FH's support for diversity groups, such as the [*LGBT community*](#).

FH's current D&I issue is called FH70; a project they launched for its 70th anniversary solely based on social inclusion. The highlighted FH70 efforts on social media with the #FH4Inclusion hashtag. Using this hashtag, a Twitter search will show that the company engages in all kinds of community collaborations. This past November, [FH worked with Open Hand Atlanta](#) and [delivered meals](#) to those in need. Among other efforts, the company has set a goal to provide \$2 million in pro bono services specifically related to social inclusion (fleishmanhillard.com).

FH has also won many awards for diversity. It was named as ‘Top Place to Work,’ Diversity & Inclusion Award Honoree by PR News on December 6, 2016. This award was based on the commitment to mentoring, work/life balance, advancement opportunities and benefits. FH was also named Winner at the 2016 Tecla Awards on April 13, 2016 for Best Agency Hispanic Social Media, as

well as a winner at the LATISM16 Awards on October 21, 2016 for Best Marketing/PR Firm Using Social Media to Reach Latinos.

Recommendations

FH's launch of FH70 and #FH4Inclusion is impressive because it is the sole purpose of their 70th anniversary commemoration. FH didn't simply tack on diversity and inclusion to a series of other goals, they chose to deliberately emphasize inclusion. Our recommendations will emphasize supporting diversity and inclusion within FH itself as an employer:

- Develop a mentorship and support initiative for diverse employees at FH to boost recruitment
- Go beyond recruitment to analyze diverse employee retention rates at FH as well as the company's diversity rates among high level positions and leadership roles
- Assess the company's existing diversity efforts, including the Alfred Fleishman Diversity Fellows initiative, to determine if those individuals were able to continue their passions in the PRAD industry. Make sure surveys and feedback mechanisms are included in these initiatives.
- With the gathered data, provide more concrete reasons why FH is a leader in creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. The company's website lists the following paragraph on diversity in terms of employment:

"FleishmanHillard's success is rooted in a rich culture of inclusion, that boasts diverse thinkers united by values that embrace diversity for the common purpose of creating meaningful, impactful communications. Through our Diversity Matters efforts, we're addressing the industry's diversity issues, including establishing fellowships for college students and recent grads, as well as industry partnerships." While this is great language, FH should provide specifics to "close the sale" in Sturgis' words.
- As seen above, company communications and press sometimes mention FH's "Diversity Matters" initiative. We weren't able to find information about what the "Diversity Matters" program does overall. The company should highlight this information more prominently on its website.

References

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