Ethical Diversity in Strategic Communications: The Hiring, Training, and Mentoring of Millennial Minorities

Rashidah C. R. McCoy

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Ethical Diversity in Strategic Communications: The Hiring, Training, and Mentoring of Millennial Minorities

Rashidah C. R. McCoy

Thesis Project Submitted to the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Journalism

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Morgantown, West Virginia 2015

Keywords: Diversity, mentoring, reverse mentorship, millennials, minority

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ABSTRACT

Ethical Diversity in Strategic Communications: 
The Hiring, Training, and Mentoring of Millennial Minorities

Rashidah C. R. McCoy

The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications practitioners and scholars. Its primary aim is to more fully understand this growing phenomenon in the industry, without undervaluing its complexity and abundance and to move toward a more inclusive and truly committed investor approach. This study used triangulated research methods to explore these factors. An online survey of people who have experience with Millennial minorities and reverse mentoring in the Strategic Communications industry was conducted. A series of in-depth interviews was conducted with individuals who have unique experiences with cultural diversity. The interviews were also conducted to develop new efforts to diversify the field with more minorities. Findings suggest more involvement from senior executives and human resource managers and more allocation of funds to foster more diversity recruitment. Findings also suggest that there be an increase of diversity training for current and new employees. The information gathered in this research helps to provide an understanding of the attitudes toward diversity, which will strengthen the pipeline of diversity for future minorities who enter the industry. This information will also help determine what steps would need to be taken to enhance the current initiatives within the profession.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction 5

2. Literature Review 12
   - Strategic Communications 12
   - The Importance of Diversity in Strategic Communications 14
   - AHANA Minorities 18
   - The Role of AHANA Minorities 19
   - Power Relations and the Effectiveness of Hiring, Training, and Mentorship for AHANA Minorities 20
   - The Mentor-Protégé Relationship: Training and Intentions 25
   - Reverse Mentorship 30

3. Research Questions 39
   - Methods 42
      - Survey Data-Gathering Process 42
      - Survey Implementation Procedures 46
      - Survey Instrument 47
      - About the Respondents 48
      - Operationalization of Variables 50
      - In-Depth Interview Data-Gathering Process 53
      - Interview Implementation Procedures 54
      - Interview Guide 55
      - About the Participants 55
      - Interview Data Analysis 57

5. Results 58
   - Survey Results 58
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Literature Review</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Results</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Analysis</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Discussion</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. References</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Appendix A: Consent Form for Survey</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Appendix B: Survey Instrument</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Appendix C: Consent Form for Interview</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Appendix D: Interview Guide</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Appendix E: Sample Communications</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Appendix F: Interview Transcripts</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Appendix G: Qualitative Survey Responses</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Appendix H: Research Terminologies</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The challenge of increasing cultural diversity within the Strategic Communications industry is perhaps one of the most pressing issues in communications. Less than 20 years ago, virtually no books or academic journal articles were available pertaining to this topic. Today, things have changed considerably and most national newspapers, magazines, blogs, and social media sites regularly run stories on increasing diversity in the workforce domestically. The changing immigration policies, shifts in demographics, and the greater demand for diversity in companies have led many to extend their hand to change. This commonality reflects the fundamental theoretical perspective of critical-cultural theory, which examines the cultural impact of media within a Marxist framework centered on the concepts of ideology and dominance of how communication is systematically distorted, so as to maintain and enhance power relations that privilege one social reality over others and that favors some interest groups at the expense of other groups (Hallahan, 1997, p. 56). Marxist framework is described as “Marxism” or of the works of Karl Marx. Marxism is defined as “the political, economic, and social principles and policies advocated by Marx; especially: a theory and practice of socialism including the labor theory of value, dialectical materialism, the class struggle, and dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a classless society (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

In the U.S. diversity is often defined as any way any group of people can differ significantly from another group of people—appearance, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or even your socioeconomic background. It has moved far beyond the legally protected categories that we have historically
examined (Whitelaw, 2010). It is recognized that diversity is a broad area to cover, so this research focused on cultural diversity. The cultural aspect of Marxism provides a suitable foundation for cultural diversity research and educational purposes. Marxism relates to the cultural theory through Cultural Marxism, which strengthens the arsenal of cultural studies in providing critical and political perspectives that enable individuals to dissect the meanings, messages, and effects of dominant cultural forms. Cultural Marxism can be seen as a tool for revolution as diversity continues to shift Strategic Communications in a direction of change.

The research of Douglas Kellner is pertinent to how Cultural Marxism can be seen in current cultural studies. Traditions of Cultural Marxism are important to the trajectory of cultural studies and to understanding its assorted types and forms in the present age. For example Kellner says that “cultural studies correspond to a globalized capitalism with an intense flow of products, culture, people, and identities with new configurations of the global and local and new forms of struggles and resistance…cultural studies insist that the politics of representation must engage class, gender, race, and sexuality, thus correcting gaps in earlier forms of Cultural Marxism” (Kellner, 2004, p. 15). Cultural studies can become part of a critical media pedagogy that enables individuals to resist media manipulation and to increase their freedom and individuality. It can empower people to gain sovereignty over their culture and to be able to struggle for alternative cultures and political change. Cultural studies are thus not just another academic fad but can be part of a struggle for a better society and a better life (Kellner, 2004).

In particular, four minority groups believe they are in a struggle to resist
hegemonic control over them by society's cultural dominant majority of white counterparts (Hallahan, 1997, p. 64). These four groups are African Americans, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American. They are described by the ethical grouping acronym AHANA. The main purpose of this study is thus to reinforce and better understand diversity in order to accomplish the goals or the outreach that corporations have set for themselves.

This research built on that foundation by focusing on the AHANA Millennial minorities who are impacted in the Strategic Communications industry. Cultural diversity in the workplace focuses on a beneficially changing environmental, that improves problem-solving and decision-making, access to a new consumer market, enhances product development, and/or the ability to compete in a global market (Fine, 1996). Previous research represents a shift to valuing the importance of differences in the workplace, rather than suppressing and denying the issue. The topic now rests at the forefront of company conversations and improvement of business and tactics used for expansion. Earlier literature in organizational communications focused solely on behavior and concerns of white males, which effectively denied the existence of others in the organization, described women, and African Americans as different and therefore deficient, incompetent, and lacking relevant skills to assist a company in its progression (Fine, 1996). As the workforce has begun to move away from different techniques of hiring, such as affirmative action the underlying premises have been exposed showing the gaps in the methods, which still leave people of color racially discriminated against during the hiring process. Historically, affirmative action focused on helping Black citizens overcome the effects of prior discrimination and segregation. Early plans
attacked racial barriers obstructing employment opportunities and contract rights (Ciocchetti, 2010). These were the barriers or “walls” that had to be knocked down. The remaining challenge – in America in particular – is take diversity serious and not just talk about it; being proactive about the issue is key. As affirmative action seeks to temporarily increase employment, educational, and societal opportunities for qualified members of underrepresented groups, there are alternatives that can be utilized when hiring Millennial minorities. The claim that diversity is a key component of a company’s work environment has been said for decades, but the manner in which the action is taken has changed. Mark Long, an associate professor of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, studies affirmative action and suggests that outreach be viewed as a key component to recruitment for colleges and universities (Greene, 2014). This element can be used in the Strategic Communications industry to increase diversity. If different agencies and companies developed relationships with Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and universities in low-income environments, it would allot more opportunities for AHANA minorities. The uses of contemporary affirmative action programs are justified under the Diversity Spotlight Rationale (DSR). The Diversity Spotlight Rationale is “forward-looking; it is decidedly not a remedial argument. It is about making a better future, and not about making up for the sins of the past” (Ciocchetti, 2010, p. 38). In this sense, utilization of the DSR is a relief for employers. Executives are no longer forced to collect information about prior institutional discrimination in order to justify preference plans as remedial. Under the DSR, employers are free to look into the future and ponder how diversity and exposure to diverse people may benefit future leaders, executives, etc. Affirmative action under the
Diversity Spotlight Rationale is voluntary. This means that companies choose to grant preferences without being compelled to do so via a court order. On the other hand, this type of non-remedial affirmative action is relatively untested in the private workplace arena. These types of alternative can lead to positive action within society for future generations to proposer in Strategic Communications.

Thomas (1990) firmly stated that the reason many companies are still wary of minorities is because they are concerned about productivity and the disproportionate share of the undertrained and undereducated. Individuals often hold stereotypes about persons whose racial-ethnicity differs from theirs (Allen, 1995). Stereotypical judgments and fears lead to hindrances amongst a company’s growth, due to the organization’s doubts of stepping outside the norm and taking a chance on a minority being hired. The individuals being categorized, as “minorities” are more than half the U.S. workforce, so white, native-born males, though undoubtedly still dominated, are themselves a statistical minority (Thomas, 1990). Through the framework of social order an ideal environment among Millennial minorities, senior executives, and other employees can be achieved. Socially ordered work environments manifest itself through the development of trust, regulation of power, and clear communication (Hays & Swanson, 2012).

More recently, critical-cultural studies in the United States have addressed questions related to gender, media, and race. These studies have focused on demographic profiling of media workers and how the people being hired do not match those being served by the company. According to Hallahan (1997), the majority of those being hired in communications are college-educated white people who grew up in
middle-class environments. Most managers are middle-aged white males, according to Hallahan’s research. Critical theorists argue that the absence of minorities, especially in managerial roles, reinforces the dominance of white male majority over other groups that work to progress in the media industry. Critical-cultural studies are inherently political in nature. The purpose is to effect change in the media and to advance the cause of the particular groups they study. The relevance of critical-cultural theory today can be applied to the current debate centered on religious values, multiculturalism, and diversity in corporations worldwide.

This research examined the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications practitioners and scholars. The primary aim of this research is to more fully understand this growing phenomenon in the industry, without undervaluing its complexity and abundance and to move toward a more inclusive and truly committed investor approach. This study showed the advantages of having ethnically diverse employees in the Strategic Communications industry, which will strengthen the pipeline of diversity for future minorities who enter the field. Theoretically, the results contribute to Strategic Communications in two ways. First, it provides a greater understanding of the critical-cultural theory, power relations, and how they can support the commitment to diversity, and how through time change can be implemented to prevent stagnation. As Fine (1996) argued, critical theory and cultural studies offer potential for research in cultural diversity in the workforce, it reinvigorates our public discourses and political institutes, all while strengthening our social, political, and economic well-being. Second, this study extends the literature on the critical-cultural theory by stipulating the experiential evidence in support of the theoretical approaches. Expanding the concept of the critical-cultural theory and power
relations to public relations context, stipulates more specific cultural aspects in a diversity context. From a top-down approach, managerially the results deliver useful guidance for Strategic Communications professionals in effectively hiring, training, and mentoring current employees and authorities, in order for them to properly prepare to enlighten young monitories who are entering the industry on the importance of diversity and how it is a valued factor of productivity. “Creativity thrives on diversity”, this quote implies that a company with a diverse staff can experience higher levels of inventiveness and innovation (Aghazadeh, 2004). This study offers guidelines for diverse employment amongst Strategic Communications when employing the underrepresented.

By gathering information on the experiences of multicultural Strategic Communications professionals and noting their perceptions of diversity within the Strategic Communications industry, it can be determined what steps the industry would need to take to enhance diversity within the profession.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Because Millennials minorities are emerging professionals in several areas of Strategic Communications research on them is limited. At this point, researchers have examined Millenial largely as the cohort of Americans born between 1981 and 2000. They are the largest generations in the U.S., representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013. This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date: 42 percent identify with a race or ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic white, around twice the share of the Baby Boomer generation when they were the same age. About 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended college, whereas only 46 percent of them Baby Boomers did so (The White House, 2014).

Strategic Communications

*Strategic communication* is a term used to denote the higher-level concerns behind communicative efforts by organizations to advance organizational mission. It is, therefore, inherently multidisciplinary as work in this area draws on literature from a wide array of other subfields, including public relations, marketing, advertising, and management (Thorson, 2013). This approach is particularly valuable given the increasing difficulty faced by organizations in differentiating among communication activities (and results) appropriately “owned” by various functional groups. Furthermore, the increasing intricacy of a global, digital society has challenged the capacity for organizations to engage in long-term strategic planning. Research in strategic communication draws on diverse disciplines, including organizational communication, management, military history, mass communication, public relations,
advertising, and marketing (Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K., 2007).

The objective of Strategic Communications is to enhance brand equity by moving customers along a customer experience path to purchase that leads to advocacy for the brand. Strategic Communications plays an essential role to inform and educate customers and prospects about brands, new products their benefits and to enhance brand image. The goal of Strategic Communications is to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time in the right place (Hallahan et al., 2007). It is critical for practitioners to construct an effective integrated marketing communications plan that delivers clear, consistent and compelling messages. Practitioners must explore new methods to leverage all elements of the communication mix and blend traditional, digital, public relations, advertising, and social media into a single, cohesive, holistic approach.

The media and Internet play an influential role in shaping how we think and enact race in our everyday lives. They provide materials that forge our identities and sense of selfhood amongst society our conception of class, ethnicity and race, nationality, sexuality, and the division of the world into categories of “us” and “them” (Kellner, 2011). These everyday images we encounter create meaning about race and ethnicity, and they play a critical role in shaping the way we understand race and ethnicity as part of our identity, our history, our social institutions, and our everyday lives.

Media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories provide
symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture. Media speculates demonstrates who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force violence and who is not. They dramatize and legitimate the power of the forces that be and show the pointless that they must stay in their places or be oppressed (Kellner, 2011, p. 7).

The Internet can be empowering to individuals as it erodes the cultural “Glass Ceiling” that hinders many, because of their lack of life exposures to other cultures. Technology allows individuals to see a broader span of diversity amongst society to be the possibilities of career progression. Breaking the corporate “Glass Ceiling” is a challenge that many AHANA minorities face as they aspire leadership positions. According to Gilgoff (2009), people of color who start at the same time as an equivalent white person have less of a chance of being at the top echelon in 20 years, in any field. With few minorities in upper management, it can be difficult for employers to picture themselves there. Technology has allowed minorities exposure to the fact that they can get only so far in their career.

**Importance of Diversity in Strategic Communications**

Strategic Communications organizations are under fire for their lack of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Many agencies and corporations are responding by focusing on recruiting a pipeline of racially and ethnically diverse talent (Gallicano, 2013). Becoming a diverse company creates a better working environment that allows free flowing innovative ideas that can contribute to the growth and development of the organization. In order to create diverse workforces, realistic goals must be set for leaders
as well as employees to overcome the challenges.

For many organizations, the definition of diversity has advanced from a focus on legally protected attributes such as race, gender, and age to a much broader definition that included a larger spectrum transformation and what one can offer from a different point of view (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Table 2.1 provides excerpts of diversity statements from the public websites of companies ranked in Fortune magazine’s 50 Top Companies for Minorities. A common theme of each statement is the reference to embracing all employees under the umbrella of diversity. Further evidence of the movement toward “inclusion” as a diversity strategy is revealed in a Human Resources Institute (2003) report of findings from a 2001 survey of Fortune 1000 companies: 96% of respondents said they provide diversity training on race, 88% on gender, 85% on ethnicity, 65% on age, 64% on disability, 57% on sexual orientation, and 54% on religion. Inclusion can be viewed as an incorporating strategy that seeks to embrace and leverage the difference of employees to benefit the company.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Web Address</th>
<th>Diversity Statement</th>
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<tr>
<td>McDonald’s</td>
<td><a href="http://mcdaonalds.com/com/corp/values/diversity.html">http://mcdaonalds.com/com/corp/values/diversity.html</a></td>
<td>Diversity at McDonald’s is understanding, recognizing, and valuing the differences that make each person unique. McDonald’s is committed to recognizing the talents and job performance of all employees and values the contributions that come from people with different backgrounds and perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fanniemae.com/careers/diversity/index.jh">http://www.fanniemae.com/careers/diversity/index.jh</a></td>
<td>… (O)ur corporate philosophy on diversity is based on respect for one another and recognition that each person brings his or her unique attributes to the corporation. Fannie Mae will be most successful in meeting its public mission and corporate goals when we fully capitalize on the skills, talents, and potential of all our employees . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PepsiCo</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pepsicodiversity.com/employees.shtml">http://www.pepsicodiversity.com/employees.shtml</a></td>
<td>We respect individual differences in culture, ethnicity, and color. PepsiCo is committed to equal opportunity for all employees and applicants. We are committed to providing a workplace free from all forms of discrimination. We respect the right of individuals to achieve professional and personal balance in their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sempra Energy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sempraenergy.com/diversity.htm">http://www.sempraenergy.com/diversity.htm</a></td>
<td>When we talk about diversity at Sempra Energy, we mean more than race, age, sexual orientation, and gender. We believe that diversity includes: • <strong>Human Diversity:</strong> Characterized by our employees’ physical differences, personal preferences, or life experiences. • <strong>Cultural Diversity:</strong> Characterized by different beliefs, values, and personal characteristics. • <strong>Systems Diversity:</strong> Characterized by the organizational structure and management systems in a workplace.</td>
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There are three organizational goals that attribute to the diversity efforts. First, organizations must center on a goal of social justice. Second, diversity must be apart of an organizations strategic business objective, not just to meet the legal requirements of Affirmative Action. Third, corporations must acknowledge diversity as a necessary factor in competing in the multinational business environment (Aghazadeh, 2004).

The concept of “manifested respect” amongst all employees will help these goals be achieved successfully. This concept emphasizes the commitment and strategies for “safeguarding minority’s interest and consensual decision-making” (Fine, 1996, p. 490). It is essential that businesses continue to recognize the relevance of accentuating minority involvement because the U.S. will continue to strengthen its bonds with other countries, and exploit their intellect to contribution in the development of our country and theirs.

The importance of global diversity goes beyond the U.S. and the alliances the country has formed with multiple nations worldwide. The commitments the countries have formed have linked cultures, which have led to globalization of economies and business practices. The economic success of several nations, especially Asia, demonstrates prominence of culture in organizational practice and cultural mores (Fine, 1996). Public relations has been a driving force behind the engagement between countries and their advancements for years, but often times the manner in which it has been used has not been beneficial for those of non-White immigrants.

Historically, public relations were used to ensure that the elite groups in commercial and governmental organizations were deeply embedded in the Whiteness system. Whiteness is a system that privileges elite groups over non-elites; elite groups
are usually White, predominately male, heterosexual, and able-bodied. Whiteness therefore became synonymous with target audiences and central to the very system of public relations that privileged White norms over other ways of living, working, and being (Munshi & Edwards, 2011). Unlike other ethnicities, Whiteness is typically not marked as a distinct race, especially when looked at through the media. Depending on the genre (movie, television, new, documentary) the historical period, the story being told, the type of production (mainstream or independent), there may be a multitude or range of representations (University of Southern California, 2015). The lack of compromise of diversity has been deeply rooted in the industry, which has hindered the structural minority pipeline of diversity for practitioners. Race continues to be a critical factor as we examine relationships in organizations, particularly a critical lens that examines mentoring literature (Blake-Beard, S., Murrell, A., & Thomas D., 2006).

AHANA Minorities

In 2011, PR Week editorial scolded PR agencies for not embracing racial, ethnic, and gender diversity at entry and more specifically senior level management (Gallicano, 2013). Lack of diverse management results in lack of intake of young minority Strategic Communications practitioners, which hinders the expansion of the industry.

It is imperative that public relations agencies cultivate strong relationships with Millennials … Millennials are the most racially and ethically diverse generation in the workplace, and Millennials are the largest in the workplace. Nearly 40 percent of Millennials represent at least one racial or ethnic group described by the acronym AHANA (Gallicano, 2013, p. 39).
AHANA is not the only minority group who encounters difficulty with diversity within companies. The Strategic Communications industry lacks diversity amongst different minority groups such as the lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender (LBGT) community, veteran status, and even the physically disabled. Diversity within an organization helps develop a creative and innovative workforce, attract and retain talent, increase employee commitment and align employee and customer's demographics. Individuals benefit from a supportive organization and a positive work environment. Working among positive people affects organizational commitment, lowers stress, anxiety, and the ability for minority employees to develop more positive relationships with colleagues occur more frequently (O'Mahoney, 2014). Creating an organizational culture that is supportive of all employees is what really matters to make a company thrive.

**The Role of AHANA Minorities**

This study follows the growing steam of importance of AHANA entering the Strategic Communications industry to accomplish the goals or outreach those corporations has set for them. Power relations help to incorporate the critical-cultural theory into the understanding of the effects of a diverse workforce. Power is defined as “the capacity to exert influence, a transaction in which you get others to change their behavior as you intended” (Toth, 2011, p.10). Traditional aspects of power have been abandoned and modernized to conform to the restructured authoritative levels. Senior executives now utilize the skills and talents of Millennials in their companies. Millennials are no longer seen as “powerless” and unknowledgeable. The generations are now blending their knowledge for the greater good of the company.
The more common perception of power is negative since power usually compels people to do things they normally would not do, distorts knowledge and truth, and relies on repression. Power is embedded in institutions, policies and social norms, and is especially difficult to transform when those whom outsiders regard as victims seem to be complicit in its exercise. Power analysis cannot be restricted to national boundaries, particularly as these become submerged in global arrangements and relationships. Power – sometimes considerable also resides in external circles and pervades domestic areas via avenues, such as shared knowledge networks, and development policies (Moncrieffe, 2004). This is an innovative explanatory concept for illumining why AHANA practitioners are still not adequately represented at all ranks in Strategic Communications and how the structure can be changed to alter this outcome. After these individuals are hired, there will be a need for proper training, mentoring, and scholarship invested into them in order for them to flourish in the workforce. Without the appropriate tools to thrive in the workforce, the traditional “Glass Ceiling” is being recast as a “concrete ceiling” an impermeable barrier that keeps women and people of color effectively locked out of the corridors of power in organizations across industries and professions (Blake-Beard, Murrell, A., & Thomas D., 2006). The dynamic power of training and mentoring minorities assist in the “break through” as they break down barriers to attain leadership positions within organizations.

Power Relations and the Effectiveness of Hiring, Training, and Mentorship for AHANA Minorities

An organization that is well prepared for a change in its demographics is more likely to thrive in the future as the market deviates. These market and demographical changes, will
allot an increase of diversity and advantages for the company. In their book *Workforce 2020*, Judy and D’Aminco (1997) discuss futuristic statics that will drive the diversity pipeline into a more progressive era for AHANA. It has been predicted that the number of White non-Hispanics would decrease from 80 percent of the nation’s population in 1980 to only 64.3 percent in 2020. Latinos will compose 37 percent of the population increase with African-Americans and Asians following. With the implementation of diverse employees, the use of diversity training (DT) has been identified as the method to cause individual-level change across attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions in order to influence organizational performance (Romanenko, 2011). DT has the ability to enable acknowledgement of differences between employees to help them understand the positive contributions diversity can provide a strategically diversity-driven company. The primary focus of DT is organizational recruitment, training, and promoting underrepresented groups. Training can occur in various forms. For example, awareness workshops and orientation sessions are common effective forms of diversity training. Certain programs emphasize how policies and procedures can be tailored to meet changes in the demographics of the workplace. Diversity training stresses the process rather than the content of training and the emotional rather than the conceptual. It includes meeting, away from work, under the direction of a facilitator or mediator, engaging in dialogue, and focusing on why some organizational acts and actions are seen as offensive while others are not (Jordan, Pierre, & Santiago, 2010). There are several activities that are commonly included in diversity initiatives that aim to increase awareness of discrimination and prejudice and to improve behavioral skills of employees relating to persons from other cultures.
Table 2.2 Activities Commonly Included in Diversity Initiatives (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Initiative</th>
<th>Sample Interventions</th>
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| Recruiting                    | • Diverse recruiting teams  
                               | • Internship programs and sponsored scholarships  
                               | • Minority conference and job fair attendance  
                               | • Recruiting efforts targeting universities and community colleges with diverse student bodies  
                               | • Minority conference and job fair attendance |
| Retention                     | • Corporate-sponsored employee resource or affinity groups  
                               | • Employee benefits (e.g., adoption, domestic partner, elder care, flexible health, and dependent spending accounts)  
                               | • Work life programs and incentives (e.g., onsite child care, flexible work schedules, onsite lactation facilities)  
| Development                   | • Leadership development training programs  
                               | • Mentoring programs |
| External Partnership          | • Minority supplier programs  
                               | • Community service outreach |
| Communication                 | • Award programs providing public recognition of managers and employees for diversity achievements  
                               | • Newsletters, internal Web sites on diversity  
                               | • Senior leadership addresses, town hall meetings, business updates |
| Training                      | • Awareness training on the organization’s diversity initiative  
                               | • Issue-based/prevention training (e.g., sexual harassment, men and women as colleagues)  
                               | • Team building and group process training |
| Staffing and Infrastructure   | • Dedicated diversity staffs  
                               | • Executive and local diversity councils |
According to the critical-cultural theory, culture and diversity helps to explain patterns of behavior and thought that characterize individuals and the groups with which they are associated. The critical aspect of theory identifies elements of constraint, oppression, and prescriptions for improving the situation. Culture is shared, intangible, and affects human behavior. Cultures are created, sustained and influenced by and through human interaction, but it is generally about the role of power in social relations when other cultures are involved (Kellner, 1993).

Several studies have empirically tested the assumption that these different types of ethincal cultures have issues in the work environment. Blake-Beard, Murrell, & Thomas (2006) stated that their finding suggest that minorities find difficulty in gaining access to mentoring relationships, this issue may be a main attribute of mentors that protégés of color receive or select. Despite the scarcity of diversity in Strategic Communications companies and organizations, strategies have been devised to change the future outcome. For example, Edelman (2005) developed a program to recruit employees from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and launched a pilot mentorship program to assist the students. Porter Novelli partnered with Together Our Resources Can Help (TORCH), a non-profit organization that offers opportunities to underrepresented students in New York City public high schools. Novelli provided an eight-week PR101 course to more than 40 TORCH students, while also raising $100,000 for the organization, hired TORCH scholars as interns, and assigned students to Novelli mentors (Gallicano, 2013).

Developments in the critical-cultural theory and power relations’ focus have led to framework for structural change. Guinier and Torres’ (2002) work on the three dimensions of
power that can be applied to why AHANA are still not adequately represented at all ranks in agencies and how the configurations can be reformed to alter the outcome. The first dimension of power is direct completion that people fighting oppression are eroded against each other in a sum zero game (career advancement in this case). The second dimension is the game’s formal and informal rules that shape the game’s outcome. For example, public relations agencies primary recruitment method is based on employees referrals, word of mouth, and who you have connections with at the agency. The final dimension of power refers to the right to influence decisions and opportunities (Gallicano, 2013).

Given this theatrical approach and perspective, it is expected that the critical-cultural theory will assist in the enlightening of companies on the importance of diversity. The basic supposition is that more diversity in the workforce will help organizations better accomplish their goals. What began as an effort to meet government and legal requirements has evolved into a priority to position companies more competitively in the marketplace. A diverse work environment can lead to an increase in market share, creativity, innovation, and improved problem solving (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). From the intercultural perspective, issues related to cultural diversity in organizations have to do with a lack of communication. The power differential within the organization and lack of authoritative guidance hinders the managerial abilities to lead employees to understanding the advantage of diverse employees. In contrast, it is expected that if more companies implement and exploit training and development efforts, such as diversity awareness training, leadership training, mentoring, and personal support groups, individuals will communicate more effectively and work more efficiently with one another. This research predicts that through the use of proper hiring of AHANA employees and concrete top-down training of managers and employees leads to a better
foundation and innovative expansion of corporations. Additionally, the SHRM study found that 91 percent of respondents think diversity initiatives helped their organization maintain a competitive advantage. Companies will profit from having this advantage by being able to market and deliver their products within different cultures (Aghazadeh, 2004).

**The Mentor-Protégé Relationship: Training and Intentions**

Employees who have mentor experiences gain greater success within a company and a better chance at promotions (West Virginia Exchange, 2013). As a protégé, you are provided a vehicle for socializing and opportunities to make a positive name for yourself amongst the seniors within the company.

The role of a mentor is to invest in the future success of a person, most often a younger professional. Those investments take the form of hundreds of conversations, e-mail exchanges, shared lunches, and collaborative creations. The role of a protégé is two-fold. First, he/she has to be open and committed to learning- and that means willingness to change and set aside the notion “I already know it all.” Next he/she has to have intellectual curiosity- a hunger for learning and a bent for applying new knowledge that’s fueled by drive and energy (West Virginia Exchange, 2013).

This success is not immediate success; long-term mentoring requires the patience and dedication of both parties. Also, understanding that mentoring is an art more than a science. There must be a solid foundation to the relationship being built between the two professionals. Matchmaking is a difficult task that takes time and energy to assure the two works well together. Compatibility, which is a necessary foundation is often ignored or absent. Reviewing the learning style, communication styles, temperament, and energy levels are helpful help pairing a mentor and protégé (West Virginia Exchange, 2013).
The foundational works lead to the developmental aspect of the “right” approach for mentoring. In an interview with West Virginia Executive (2013), Skip Lineberg a member of Spilman Thomas & Battle, PLLC law firm stated that his approach is to open up a learning space with a person where they can learn from each other. He felt that if he’s not learning from his protégé, the process has not reached its full potential. Mentoring is a two-way street where returns on investment should be seen. Mr. Lineberg stated, “What I look for is growth and give-back. Is the person developing and growing? Is it beginning to click? Are they as invested in the relationship as I am? Do they initiate the learning conversation or exchanges to an appropriate extent, or does it feel like I have to force thing most of the time.” Looking for these signs in a mentoring relationship establishes the trust and confidence to continue progression in ones career and other aspects of life. As time continues the bond will strengthen between the individuals involved. The bold intensifies if the mentor takes responsibility for the learning content, but the mentee must begin to directly initiate the learning topics “Hey can you help me with this?” or indirectly by the types and nature of questions. Mentoring cannot be effective if young professionals do not have a genuine curiosity and willingness to expand their perspectives.

Organizational studies have identified three main mentor functions: coaching protégés on career development, providing social support, and serving as a role model (Scandura & Viator, 1994). While coaching a protégé can lead to high visibility within the company, retention, and promotions, there are psychosocial and socialization aspects of the mentorship that are necessary for career developmental functionalities. These functions provide role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship – activities that influence the protégé’s self-image and competence (Chao, Gardner, & Walz, 1992). These
are areas of emphasis that fall under the fourteen expectations of Millennial or as referred to in Table I “Generation Y” (Zemke, 2001).

Table 2.3 The Fourteen Expectations of Generation Y (Tulgan & Martin, 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Fourteen Expectations of Generation Y</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Providing work that really matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Balance clearly delegated assignments with freedom and flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Offer increasing responsibility as a reward for accomplishments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Spend time getting to know staff members and their capabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Provide ongoing training and learning opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Establish mentoring relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Create a comfortable, low-stress environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Allow some flexibility in scheduling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Focus on work, but be personable and have a sense of humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Balance the roles of “boss” and “team player.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Treat Yers as colleagues, not as interns or “teenagers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Be respectful, and call forth respect in return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Consistently provide constructive feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Reward Yers when they’ve done a good job.</td>
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</table>

Having a role model within the company to help guide the expectations and innovative thoughts, can better protégés outcomes and organizational variables. Role modeling is a unique mentoring function where “at the manager level, there was trend away from counseling on doing toward behaving and being partner-like” (Scandura & Viator, 1994). Positive role models are individuals who have achieved outstanding success, are widely expected to inspire other to pursue similar excellence, and they inspire others by illustrating an ideal, desired self, highlighting possible achievements that people can strive for. They do this by demonstrating the route and assuring others that it is possible. They encourage their protégé to adopt the kinds of strategies favored individuals pursuing promotional goals that entail striving to achieve an ideals self; strategies involve eager pursuit of gains or successes (Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002). The strength of the role model and/or mentor may differ based on the protégé’s organizational level, “role modeling
was more important in the mentoring of manager protégés, where mentors would demonstrate “how to behave” rather than articulate “what to do” (Scandura & Viator, 1994). As Millennial minorities enter the Strategic Communications industry after graduation, they need a balance of a strong role model and a well-versed mentor. Having someone who possesses both these traits will aid in the continuous professional growth and understanding that is needed to prosper in the industry.

The links between career-related and psychosocial mentorship functions and the phases of mentorship are dependent upon the type of mentorship that takes place. During the initiation phase it is decided if the relationship will be formal or informal (Chao, Gardner & Walz, 1992). There are four distinct phases of mentorship that observe the connections associated with different mentorship functions and outcomes. These phases help organizations and individuals maximize positive outcomes for mentors, their protégé’s, and the organization as a whole. The four phases are the initial, cultivation, separation, and the redefinition phase (Chao, 1997). The initial phase is the time period when the mentorship forms. Through initial interactions that involve organizational members, a prospective protégé begins to respect the competence of a potential mentor who serves as a valuable role model. At the same time, the mentor begins to distinguish the protégé as someone who deserves special attention and coaching within the organization. The Cultivation phase would be the period in which mentorship functions are maximized. The phase may last from 2 to 5 years as the protégé learns from the mentor and the mentor promotes and protects the protégé. A mentor’s elevation of a protégé’s career may occur through actual promotion decisions or may occur through developing the protégé’s performance, potential, and visibility within the organization.
The third phase involves an operational and psychological separation between the mentorship partners when the functions provided by the mentor decrease and the protégé acts with more individuality. The Separation phase may last between 6 and 24 months and may be emotionally stressful as either one or both mentorship partners perceive the break-up with anxiety or insubordination. Last, the Redefinition phase terminates a mentorship and the partners evolve the relationship to one of informal contact and mutual support. A period of indeterminate length, the Redefinition phase can change the senior-mentor/junior-protégé relationship to a more peer-like friendship (Chao, 1997, p. 16).

Through these phases a bond is developed, but it begins with a foundation of a formal or informal mentorship. Informal mentorships can be based on work or non-work issues. The mentor would select a protégé with whom they can identify with and are willing to devote their attention. In contrast, the formal, mentorships are typically not based on an initial informal relationships or interactions between organizational members. The matching process between mentor and protégé may range from random assignment to it being based on protégé files. Compared to the informal mentorship, formal mentors may not see the protégé as worthy of particular attention and support. Furthermore, the adjustment period for the formal mentor and protégé may require more to get to know each other, due to a more forced relationship (Chao, Gardner & Walz, 1992). The outcomes of having a mentor are linked to mentorship functions, given their connection with interactions between mentors and protégés. As a coach or counselor, a mentor may encourage a protégé to engage in more active career planning or to become more involved with his or her career. As a teacher, the mentor may help a protégé learn
to adjust or become socialized into his or her organizational role, as well as provide encouragement to progress within the company and/or industry (Chao, 1997). There are aspects of unwillingness and neglect that often arise with formal mentorship, that must be avoided when mentoring any group of people. Due to formal mentorship entailing a degree of pressure, the mentor and protégé may be required to participate in the program as a function to their company positions. This pressure could decrease the mentor’s willingness to help the protégé and the protégé’s willingness to be open to accepting the guidance or providing guidance to the mentor (Chao et al., 1992).

**Reverse Mentorship**

In the past, older or more seasoned professionals within industries held the most expertise. Younger or less experienced colleges relied on the elders to pass along information to increase collective power. Today, knowledge is found at all levels of the workplace, and those who learn from both more- and less-experienced coworkers are more equipped to accomplish personal, client, and corporate goals. This aspect of learning from colleagues comes about through traditional and “reverse” mentoring (Hays & Swanson, 2012). The value of reverse mentoring has been acknowledged and applied in other disciplines, such as the business, education, and medical community, but there is almost a complete absence of any scientific studies addressing reverse mentoring related to the public relations industry (Hays & Swanson, 2012). The aspects of reverse mentoring that did exist were described as “voluntary mentoring” or an “internship program” (Hays & Swanson, 2011). Reverse mentoring is defined as the pairing of a younger, junior employee acting as a mentor to share expertise and innovation with an older, senior colleague as the mentee. It involves a structured or
unstructured workplace relationship between senior professionals and younger, less-experienced workers. Typically the younger worker has less expertise within the organization but more technological familiarity and skills. The pairing of senior professionals with more technologically knowledgeable workers brings about the education of those less technologically inclined (Pyle, 2005, p.40). A relationship as such helps to build a bond while strengthening the gap between the older and younger generations in the Strategic Communications field. While reverse mentoring holds promise for fostering better intergenerational relationships, it also builds the leadership pipeline, enhances diversity, and drives innovation. It also adds a forum for Millennial employees to have immediate impact and develop strong work relationships with organizational leaders (Murphy, 2012).

Table: Reverse Mentoring Compared to Traditional Mentoring (Kram, 1985).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reverse Mentoring Exchange</th>
<th>Reverse Mentoring Functions</th>
<th>Traditional Mentoring Functions</th>
<th>Traditional Mentoring Exchange (Kram, 1985)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Shares technical or content expertise and enhances understanding of generational trends</td>
<td>- Career Support</td>
<td>- Career Support</td>
<td>- Public support for advancement in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides guidance and feedback on training and mastery of new skills and knowledge</td>
<td>- Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>- Coaching</td>
<td>- Enhances knowledge and understanding of how to navigate effectively in the corporate world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collaboration on projects and research that create contact with each other's colleagues</td>
<td>- Coaching*</td>
<td>- Exposure and visibility</td>
<td>- Create opportunities to demonstrate competence through contact with other senior managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrates technology savvy and identifies opportunities to apply knowledge</td>
<td>- Skill development*</td>
<td>- Protection</td>
<td>- Shields mentee from untimely or potentially damaging contacts with other senior managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Generates new approaches to problems and suggestions for implementing solutions</td>
<td>- Challenging ideas</td>
<td>- Challenging assignments</td>
<td>- Assigning challenging work, supported with training and ongoing performance feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaches about social networking sites and social media; introduces to peers/colleagues</td>
<td>- Networking*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to increase social integration and social capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides support for learning and feedback on new knowledge and skill acquisition</td>
<td>- Psychosocial Support</td>
<td>- Role modeling</td>
<td>- Attitudes, values, and behavior provide a model for mentee to emulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides support and encouragement that enables mentee/mentor to experiment with new behaviors</td>
<td>- Support and feedback</td>
<td>- Acceptance and confirmation</td>
<td>- Provides support and encouragement that enables mentee to experiment with new behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mutual liking and sharing of life events through informal exchange; connecting friends across levels or divisions in the organization</td>
<td>- Acceptance and confirmation</td>
<td>- Friendship</td>
<td>- Social interaction characterized by mutual liking, understanding, and informal exchanges about work and nonwork experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Openly discuss developmental needs and encourage career and personal development</td>
<td>- Friendship</td>
<td>- Friendship</td>
<td>- Enables mentee to explore personal concerns that may interfere with a positive sense of self in the organization; talk openly about anxieties/fears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offers fresh perspective on the organization and its business(es)</td>
<td>- Affirmation and encouragement*</td>
<td>- Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrates openness to new ideas, innovation, and a global perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shares willingness to learn</td>
<td>- Role Modeling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New perspective*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Behavior to emulate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identifying with values</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

*Reverse mentoring functions that differ from traditional mentoring are in bold. Asterisks indicate overlap with alternative mentoring functions (see Allen & Finkelstein, 2003).
Due to an aging population, between 2004 and 2012, there was a 48% increase in the percentage of workers aged 55 to 64 and a 40% increase in those ages 65 and above. At the same time, Millennials started entering the workforce in large numbers during the summer of 2004, when they began graduating college. A large influx of Millennials will continue entering the workforce until 2022 (Chaudhuri, & Ghosh, R., 2012). The age gap between the generations requires a need to communicate well and build good relationships with one another, especially in the early stages of a career. Positive peer relationships provide valuable feedback on work performance and helps workers strategize about their career options. Peer relationships are more lateral and therefore perceived as less threatening for exchange of information (Hays & Swanson, 2011), reverse mentoring is a great method to developing these relationships. However, note that reverse mentorship can be cross-generational; it is not always age dependent. Reverse mentoring can be seen as a cross-generational leadership development tool, as it plays a key role in learning and growth of leaders. In particular, the opportunity to interact one-on-one with members of senior management assist newer employees in developing a more sophisticated and strategic perspective on the organization (Day, 2001).

**Table: Generational Characteristics (Smola & Sutton, 2002).**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Key Events/Issues</th>
<th>Typical Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans, or the “Greatest Generation”&lt;br&gt;Born before 1945&lt;br&gt;75 million (25% still in workforce)</td>
<td>- World War I&lt;br&gt;- Great Depression&lt;br&gt;- World War II&lt;br&gt;- FDR’s New Deal&lt;br&gt;- The Cold War&lt;br&gt;- John F. Kennedy assassination&lt;br&gt;- Vietnam War&lt;br&gt;- Martin Luther King assassination&lt;br&gt;- Watergate&lt;br&gt;- Woodstock</td>
<td>- Loyal to institutions; stay due to loyalty to clients and customers&lt;br&gt;- Value job stability&lt;br&gt;- Patriotic with a high work ethic&lt;br&gt;- Take care of possessions and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers&lt;br&gt;Born 1946–1964&lt;br&gt;80 million</td>
<td>- Want to put their stamp on institutions; stay to make a difference&lt;br&gt;- Value individuality, self-fulfillment, and integrity&lt;br&gt;- Embrace a psychology of entitlement, expecting the best from life&lt;br&gt;- Strengths in building consensus and effecting change&lt;br&gt;- May experience simultaneous pressures of caring for children and elders</td>
<td>- Are skeptical of institutions; stay to build a career&lt;br&gt;- Value independence and advancement opportunities&lt;br&gt;- Accustomed to immediate feedback&lt;br&gt;- Comfort with diversity, emphasizing similarities rather than differences&lt;br&gt;- Technically competent&lt;br&gt;- Value stable family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X, or Baby Busters&lt;br&gt;Born 1965–1978&lt;br&gt;46 million</td>
<td>- End of the Cold War&lt;br&gt;- First Gulf War&lt;br&gt;- Sesame Street and MTV&lt;br&gt;- AIDS worldwide&lt;br&gt;- Dual-career households&lt;br&gt;- High divorce rates&lt;br&gt;- Personal computers/video games&lt;br&gt;- Worldwide competition</td>
<td>- Judge institutions on their own merit; stay for praise and rewards&lt;br&gt;- Value work-life balance, education, and innovation&lt;br&gt;- Wired or connected 24 hours/day&lt;br&gt;- Comfort with global issues&lt;br&gt;- Desire to be “heard,” have an immediate impact&lt;br&gt;- Prefer working in teams&lt;br&gt;- Close relationships with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials, or Generation Y, Nexters, Generation Me&lt;br&gt;Born 1978–1999&lt;br&gt;76 million</td>
<td>- Rapid technology advances&lt;br&gt;- Globalization&lt;br&gt;- High immigration&lt;br&gt;- Internet and social networking&lt;br&gt;- 9/11/2001&lt;br&gt;- Iraq/Afghanistan wars&lt;br&gt;- The Great Recession</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>
Jack Welch, former Chief Executive Officer of General Electric, formally introduced reverse mentoring in 1999 when he organized 500 of his top managers to find young employees who could teach them about the Internet. Welch chose a mentor and blocked off time to learn about everything from Internet bookmarks to competitors’ Web sites. Some organizations are now expanding the concept to cover an array of topics. The goal is to use the knowledge that resides within an organization to its full advantage (Greengard, 2002).

Since then, reverse mentoring has become a “best practice” in both corporate and academic settings. Several large corporations have engaged in this practice, such as Dell, Procter & Gamble, Time Warner, General Motors, Unilever, Deloitte & Touche, and the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, R., 2012; Murphy, 2012). A couple of years ago, Procter & Gamble CIO Steve David – a 30-plus-year veteran of the company and a longtime mentoring advocate – began a reverse-mentoring relationship with an employee scientist, so he could learn more about how science and toxicology affect business decisions. The mentor and protégé met every month or two in an office or over lunch to discuss topics ranging from the structure of DNA to sophisticated biotechnology issues (Greengard, 2002).

In the mid 1990s Procter & Gamble developed another reverse mentorship program that has been acknowledged by the public, called Mentor Up, which paired mid-level management women in the company with upper-level management men to improve interpersonal skills and to retain more of the skilled women who were valued by the company (Leh, 2005). Reverse mentoring programs such as Mentor Up, can help professionals of all levels develop sensitization to issues such as workplace diversity, work-life balance, subject matter advances, and global perspective, all of which can contribute to increasing levels of engagement at work where engagement is defined as a
positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, R., 2012). These are skills that can be taught, but often need to be experienced first-hand in a company. When a company or organization has a diverse pool of employees from different ethnic backgrounds, age ranges, professional and life experiences, teaching and learning these skills are less complex for individuals to grasp. Furthermore, the experience of being a mentor in a reverse mentoring relationship can benefit the Millennials as they are no longer seen a dependent or insufficiently competent in front of their mentees who are usually viewed as the “expert” (Leh, 2005). Some of the other benefits could include information access, appreciation and respect, personal fulfillment and satisfaction, improved moral and self-esteem, reduced turnover, and power development (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, R., 2012; Leh, 2005).

The effective use of power at work is, at some levels, more about networking and developing personal relationship than being good at your job. There are more aspects of one’s career than competence, the ability to project drive and self-confidence means more. The most capable leaders are knowledgeable on the appropriate manner on sharing resources and power. They use their power to strengthen and enrich their less powerful subordinates. This helps the organization grow while lessening opportunities for supervisors to bully or take advantage of those who report to them (Hays & Swanson, 2012). Through these efforts Millennials will be given the opportunities of networking and sharing their unique expertise with the senior ranked employees. Millennials, Gen Y, are the young generation who are considered to be empowered, self-directed, resourceful, more accepting of diversity, and masters of technology. While Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, represent the aging workforces who are at risk for burnout.
(Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Approximately 80 million Millennials and 85 million Baby Boomers populate the world,

Millennials are now the largest, most diverse generation in the U.S. population. They represent the largest generation in the United States, comprising roughly one-third of the total population in 2013. This means that the Millennial generation will continue to be a sizable part of the population for many years (The White House, 2014). The Baby Boomers clearly outnumber the Millennials, which expressed the need for these two generations to coincide since they are still amongst each other in the industry (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). In order to establish a cohesive bond and network, the two generations could indulge in open conversation through the techniques of reverse mentorship to enlighten and encourage one another. As Murphy (2012) notes:

Research findings on developmental networks show that individuals receive support from various relationships at work, which may include supervisors, upper level managers, coworkers, and subordinates, as well as family, friends, and community members (p. 555). The support given from coworkers and families will encourage the reverse mentorship process, which will make the undergoing of the elements less difficult to adjust to. Reverse mentorship is characterized by several elements, including

(1) Unequal status of partners with the mentee, rather than the mentor, the senior member in the hierarchy of the organization; (2) Knowledge sharing with the mentee focused on learning from the mentor’s technical or content expertise and generational perspective; (3) Emphasis on professional and leadership skill development of mentors; and (4) Commitment to the shared goal of support and mutual learning. Organizations as well as participants must be aware of these
structural and content-based characteristics in order to effectively manage reverse mentoring relationships (p. 555).

This structure is one that has led many Strategic Communications professionals to begin utilizing the reverse mentorship techniques. Laura Perry, a public relations executive with more than 30 years of experience, responded to a request from a college student mentoring where she stated, “I ended up being the one who received the mentoring.” Perry’s relationship with the student for the University of Georgia allowed her to gain new knowledge and expertise along with “amazing access to resources” available online (Perry, 2009, p. 7). While reverse mentoring seems to not be commonly used in Strategic Communications especially with minority Millennials, the literature has given little attention to the topic.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As previously discussed, research on Millennials has focused primarily on the general population of those individuals who are born between 1981 and 2000. This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date. In trying to understand the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications practitioners and scholars, researchers have found some conflicting information about how senior employees view Millennials. For example, USA Today (2011) found that Millennials have been variously described as enthusiastic, adaptable, entrepreneurial and skilled multitaskers — and as lazy, entitled and unmanageable job hoppers. Lynch (2008) emphasized that employers do not see the abilities, energy, and radical difference that Millennials possess, nor do they see the uniqueness they bring to the workplace and career field. As time progressed senior employees and human resources managers are more inclined to recognize the potential and advantages of having Millennial minorities within their organizations. Based on these findings, a research question was posed:

RQ1: How prevalent are Millennial minority college graduates to the Strategic Communications industry?

Reverse mentorship has the potential to be used as a platform to understand other generations so that we can build relationships that lead to co-operation and job satisfaction. Strategic Communications has moved beyond using reverse intergenerational learning as a tool for only learning new IT is a practice, which has not yet gained general acceptance in the wider business environment. Surely this represents a missed opportunity (Baily, 2009). As more Millennials join the workforce, reverse mentoring is growing as a developmental
practice. It is also helpful as more Baby Boomers stick around past traditional retirement age. Large organizations have made it a tool in their learning repertoire. For example, 19% of Dell employees in the company-mentoring program engaged in reverse mentoring in 2010 (Emelo, 2012). To examine the effect of reverse mentoring and the standards used to measure its effectiveness a research question were posed:

RQ2: How effective is reverse mentoring amongst Millennial minority college graduates in Strategic Communications, and what standards are used to measure effectiveness?

Researchers have emphasized the importance of evaluating reverse mentoring programs. Requiring mentors to complete an "evaluation tool" shortly after each meeting gives mentors additional data for planning future meetings (Altschul, 2007). However research is limited with respect to the professional evaluation method of reverse mentorship. To further determine the role of evaluation and success, a research question is posed:

RQ3: In what ways are Strategic Communications professionals evaluating the success of reverse mentoring in the workplace?

Some researchers found that reverse mentoring can be beneficial and provide valuable learning opportunities for all involved. As with all mentoring, commitment, respect, honest communication, and specific learning goals are key for success (Emelo, 2012). For example, Pearl Assurance and Proctor and Gamble Co. have been cited as leaders in the field in this area of reverse intergenerational learning, by adopting a “best practice” approach of linking senior management with junior employees. The approach was not limited to it, but also included the areas of diversity and biotechnology senior
management have not only learnt about how to utilize the new technology, but the technique has also enabled sensitization to issues such as ‘‘women in the workplace’’ and resource management (Baily, 2009). This might make reverse mentoring more appealing to those senior executives and Millennial minorities. To further explore the role of a “best practice” model, a research question was posed:

RQ4: How would Strategic Communications practitioners describe a “best practice” model for implementing a reverse-mentoring program in a Strategic Communications workplace?
CHAPTER 4: METHODS

The study utilized a survey and five in-depth interviews to gain a broad understanding of how prevalent Millennial minorities are to the Strategic Communications industry and the effectiveness of mentoring minority Millennial college graduates. It also examined what standards are used to measure effectiveness, the success of reverse mentoring in the workplace, and how diversity is viewed amongst current industry professionals. This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the process of gathering survey data, as well as the procedures used to conduct the survey. Next, the survey instrument is discussed, followed by a description of the respondents. Then, the variables are operationalized and data analysis procedures are discussed. Following the information about the survey is the details of the interview process, beginning with the process of gathering interview data and procedures used to conduct the interviews. The interview guide is detailed, and then the respondents are described. Discussion of data analysis procedures closes the chapter.

Survey Data-Gathering Process

The first component of this research was to conduct an online survey to gain insight into how prevalent Millennial minorities (based on the research questions) are to the Strategic Communications industry, the effectiveness of mentoring amongst minority Millennial college graduates in Strategic Communications, and what standards are used to measure effectiveness, the success of mentoring and reverse mentoring in the workplace. In addition to obtaining a breadth of information from diverse audiences, an online survey was chosen because of the low cost of creating and hosting the questionnaire and the ease of exporting the data to SPSS. Although using multiple
survey methods improves survey results (Luther, 2011), the time and cost constraints of this study do not allow for methods other than an online survey. However, this study revolved around an online platform, so an online survey is relevant to the respondents; they would likely prefer an online survey because they used the Internet to participate in the hiring, training, and mentoring of Millennial minorities.

The study used a non-probability-based sample of people to gather research subjects and hopefully broaden and deepen the research sample. The strategy was applied as a response to overcome the problems associated with understanding and sampling concealed populations such as the deviant and the socially isolated, in this case minorities (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Futing Liao, 2004). Because the intention of the research was to examine the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications practitioners and scholars. The primary aim of this research is to more fully understand this growing phenomenon in the industry. It would not have been helpful to take a sample of any general population.

Participants for the survey were found through Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is arguably the most-widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research in various disciplines across the social sciences. It is sometimes used as the main vehicle through which informants are accessed, or as an auxiliary mean, which assists researchers in enriching sampling clusters, and accessing new participants and social groups (Noy, 2008). This method of data collect is particularly effective when trying to obtain information on and access to “hidden populations” such as those who may not feel comfortable openly discussing a topic or being identified with a topic or issue. When utilizing snowball sampling there is specific information that must be conveyed by the stemma, which should include the
number of referrals contacted and their basic socio-demographic attributes, in the capacity the stemma is a static depiction of a dynamic process it should convey the following types of network information as well.

The primary investigator, co-investigator, and others sent the survey to people in their social networks via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, the West Virginia University Reed College of Media and Delaware State University Department of Communications alumnae portal, the Odwyer PR Firm Database, and personal contacts. Delaware State University alumnae portal was utilized because of the varied pool of African American Strategic Communications professionals who could give insight into the topic of diversity and Millennials minorities. The posts encouraged readers to take the survey if they were Strategic Communications professionals with any experience with mentoring, reverse mentorship, or insight on how diversity could improve the Strategic Communications industry. They were also encouraged to send it to people they know who may have similar experiences. The Facebook posts were concise, as to increase the likelihood potential participants would read them. The tweets were inherently concise because of the platform’s 140-character limit. The posts were made frequently to increase the likelihood people see them, but not excessively, to avoid annoying readers with a large number of messages. Posts made toward the end of the survey period mentioned that the survey period was closing soon, so participants were immediately needed.

Throughout the two months, 10 reminder updates were posted each week to potential participants on social media sites. The messages encouraged viewers to share the survey link on their pages. Asking participants to share the survey was essential to spreading it to the people who have applied diversity hiring, training, and reverse
mentorship techniques. In all, up to four Facebook and Twitter, and up to five LinkedIn messages were posted. Because LinkedIn posts have a shorter shelf life, a greater number of posts are needed for effective communication.

After the several Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn posts sharing the survey had been made, the number of responses was still below the desired number of 100 respondents. One hundred surveys allowed the contribution of an array of participants from different braches of the Strategic Communications industry, who have unique experiences, and diverse input about the minority Millennials and reverse mentorship. The number of participants was also compatible for a small research study. Several outlets were used to try to gather additional responses. First, several Strategic Communications professionals who are alumnae of West Virginia University’s Reed College of Media Delaware State University Department of Communications shared the link with their colleagues. Then, the survey link was shared with 500 plus professional listed on the 2014 Edition of O’Dwyer’s Directory of Public Relations Firms, which contains the listings of 1,300 public relations firms and public relations departments of advertising agencies worldwide. Still being slightly under the goal, the survey link and instructions were posted on multiple LinkedIn Strategic Communications groups. No respondents were compensated for their participants. After these efforts yielded a number of responses that reached the goal of 100, the survey was shared on Twitter again, attracting some participants who had not yet completed it. The survey opened on December 18, 2014, and closed on February 6, 2015. See Appendix E for sample Facebook posts, sample Twitter posts, sample LinkedIn group posts, sample email communications, and a sample forum post.
Survey Implementation Procedures

The Qualtrics Web-based survey software, provided by the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University, was used to implement the survey. This program allowed the responses to be downloaded directly to an SPSS data file to be analyzed. The survey did not require passwords or access codes, making it easier for participants to take the survey and thus likely leading to a larger number of responses. To ensure the results were not affected by multiple responses from the same individual, a software feature was used to prevent any one person from taking the survey more than once. Qualtrics allowed the survey to contain a screening question, “Have you ever heard of reverse mentorship?” Respondents who answered “yes” were shown the rest of the questions, but those who answered “no” were taken to the next set of questions with asked about their current knowledge of reverse mentoring.

Because reverse mentorship is a term that is often used informally and not yet widely used on a formal level of mentorship, the number of individuals and/or companies who utilized it formally is limited. The lack of reverse mentorship and industry Millennial minorities limited the number of participants who were reached. These limitations made it unlikely that the survey could reach hundreds of people in three months. Taking these factors into consideration, the goal number of the participants was 100. Participants were told they could skip any questions they did not want to answer, but respondents who did not answer at least 70% of the questions were deleted. The threshold of 70% was chosen because it is close to having three-fourths of the questions answered without having to reach the 75% mark exactly. Additionally, it could be seen in examining the raw survey data that a number of respondents stopped
answering questions after the first few, so including these responses could skew the data by having some questions with many more answers than others. Before filtering, the number of responses was 102. After discarding responses that met the criteria for removal, the final number of valid participants was 52.

**Survey Instrument**

The survey was open for three months and contained 46 questions. Most of the questions regarding an individual’s familiarity of different aspects of Strategic Communications technologies due to reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial used the five-point Likert-type scales. The Likert-type scales which allowed participants to give more thoughtful responses than simple “yes or no” questions would have permitted (Luther, 2011). The survey contained some open-ended questions to allow respondents to elaborate on their knowledge of reverse mentorship, what they think is the “best practice” model for implementing a reverse mentoring program, and how to measure the success of the informal or formal mentoring program. The questions were ordered by topic (i.e., questions about reverse mentoring, then questions about Millennial minorities, etc.) to maintain a logical flow (Luther, 2011). The questionnaire also included an introduction explaining the goals, purpose, and the importance of the survey, informing participants that the questionnaire would take no more than 15 minutes of their time, that their responses would be kept confidential, and that they were allowed to quit taking the questionnaire at any time.

This study measured the insight of Strategic Communications professionals, not a general audience’s insight toward the platform, so the survey largely eschewed basic
questions about participants’ familiarity with reverse mentorship and focused on specific areas that are prevalent to the skill-sets of Millennial minorities.

The survey began with the screening question, “Have you heard of “Reverse Mentoring”? Responses from participants who answer “yes” and “no” were analyzed. The questions were designed to find out if Strategic Communications professionals were knowledgeable of the term and process of “reverse mentoring” In addition to questions about their reverse mentoring knowledge; participants were also asked demographic questions, questions about their experience and involvement with reverse mentoring, Millennial minorities and more. See Appendix A for the survey consent form and Appendix B for the survey instrument.

About the Respondents

Of the usable responses (n=52), survey participants represented seven different entities of the Strategic Communications industry and 12 unknown or combined branches of the profession. The type of company that the majority of the participants were from was an Agency/Firm 40% (21), the second type was Non-Profit 19% (10), and the third was For-Profit Organization/Hospital 15% (8) company. Twenty-three percent (2) participants selected "Other" and did not specify their answer. Five (9%) participants identified with the Internationals branch of Strategic Communications and one (2%) person identified with Government Agency/Municipality.

More respondents were staff members of a firm, company, or department with 100-300 employees. Fifteen other participants selected the “Other” option in reference to the number of staff members in their firm, company, or department. Majority of the participants, 63% (32) work for companies that have been in existence for 20 years or more, 14%(7) work
for newly founded companies who have been inexistence for 0-5 years, 10%(10) work for companies between the age of 6-10 and 11-15. The last 4%(2) recognized their companies’ age as “Other”.

Almost half, 43%(22) of the respondents worked in Strategic Communications or a closely aligned field for 20 years or more and another 25%(13) were new to the industry and had only worked for 0-5 years. The other 16%(8) have worked in the industry for 6-10 and 14%(7) have worked in the Strategic Communications industry for 11-15 years. The last 2%(1) chose “Other as their time frame for working in the Strategic Communications industry or one closely aligned.

More than half, 59%(30) of the respondents stated that they had not heard of reverse mentoring and the other 41%(21) stated that they had heard of reverse mentoring prior to the research survey. More than half, 53%(27) stated that their organization does not current practice revers mentoring amongst their employees, while 47%(24) stated that their companies did practice reverse mentoring.

More than half, 51%(27), of the respondents conducted their reverse mentoring in “One-on-One” sessions, 36%(19) respondents utilized “Spot” reverse mentoring, and 27%(14) of the respondents held their reverse mentoring in “Small-Groups”. Among the remaining respondents, they used phone-mentoring 21%(11); email mentoring 19%(10), 15%(8) stated they used “Other” methods of mentoring. Those who selected “Other” stated that their organization does not practice reverse mentoring or they do not practice it on a formal level. The lowest percentage of respondents, 10%(5) use “Large-Groups” to conduct their reverse mentoring. The rest of answers given were in the single digits; however, a full breakdown of
the number of projects backed can be found in Appendix F. As shown Figure 1, the most popular category was “One-on-One” and the second most popular category was “Spot” mentoring. Participants could select multiple strategies as an answer for this question.

**FIGURE 1: Number of Respondents Who Indicated Employing Specific Reverse Mentoring Strategies**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of respondents using different reverse mentoring strategies.]

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**Operationalization of Variables**

*Millennial.* To measure the prevalent are Millennial minorities in the Strategic Communications industry. RQ1 asked: How prevalent are Millennial minority college graduates to the Strategic Communications industry? A Millennial (also known as Generation Y, Y2K’s, Echo Boomers, the Internet generation, Nexters) is defined, as the cohort of Americans born between 1981 and 2000 are the largest generation in the U.S., representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013 (Baily, 2009). This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also
stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date: 42 percent identify with a race or ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic white, around twice the share of the Baby Boomer generation when they were the same age. About 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended college, whereas only 46 percent of the Baby Boomers did so (The White House, 2014).

The prevalence of Millennial minorities and their benefits were measured by two open-ended questions, How do you think companies can better engage Millennial minorities entering the Strategic Communications industry? Please choose all that apply. What do you think are the biggest benefits of having Millennial minorities within your company? Please choose all that apply. This question one was then measured by four five-point Likert-type scales that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly disagree” and two questions that have the option for multiple answers to be chosen.

Reverse Mentoring. To measure the effectiveness of reverse mentoring amongst Millennial minorities, RQ2 asked: How effective is reverse mentoring amongst Millennial minority college graduates in Strategic Communications, and what standards are used to measure effectiveness? Reverse mentoring is defined as the pairing of a younger, junior employee acting as a mentor to share expertise with an older, senior colleague as the mentee. It involves a structured or unstructured workplace relationship between senior professionals and younger/less experienced workers. Typically the younger worker has less expertise within the organization but more technological familiarity and skills. The pairing of senior professionals with more technologically knowledgeable workers brings about the education of those less technologically inclined (Pyle, 2005, p. 40). Reverse mentoring was measured with six open-ended questions that explores what reverse mentoring means to the individual,
the companies reverse mentoring program process, the organizational model used to conduct the mentoring, if the program is the inform or formal, the success, the evaluation, advice for others who want to succeed with reverse mentoring, and six five-point Likert-type scale questions that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly disagree.”

_Evaluating the Success of Reverse Mentoring._ To determine how successful a reverse mentoring program within the Strategic Communications industry, RQ3 asked: _In what ways are Strategic Communications professionals evaluating the success of reverse mentoring in the workplace?_ This variable was measured with three open-ended questions that examined if the organization considered their program successful. For these questions respondents were asked to briefly explain why they considered their organization successful and to explain the evaluation process and how it works. The nature of reverse mentoring makes sharing information about Strategic Communications topics such as, technological advancements, social media, and digital marketing prevalent to the success of the program. Knowing how reverse mentoring programs are evaluated could give more insight into how to better structure the programs for future generations with a more formal layout and specific topics to address during mentoring sessions.

_Best Practice Model._ To determine the “best practice” model for implementing a reverse-mentoring program in a Strategic Communications workplace, RQ4 asked: _How would Strategic Communications practitioners describe a “best practice” model for implementing a reverse-mentoring program in a Strategic Communications workplace?_ This variable was measured with three open-ended questions that directly asked the participant to describe their idea of a “best practice” model for a reverse mentoring
program and to give advice to other who want to succeed with reverse mentoring. It then asked the participant if they train the mentors, mentees, or both. If so, how do they train the individuals? The survey data set was analyzed using SPSS v. 22. Frequencies were used to analyze liker-type survey questions. Descriptive statistics were used to answer four research questions.

**In-Depth Interview Data-Gathering Process**

The second component of the research was to conduct thorough interviews. Conducting in-depth interviews helped gain greater insight into information on the experiences of multicultural practitioners and reflect their perceptions of diversity within the industry. The interview format allowed participants to discuss aspects of cultural diversity within their strategic communications organization, with a particular focus on the diversity among African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian American, and Native Americans (AHANA). Interviews added context to the survey responses, as they gave information that could help explain why survey respondents might have answered questions the way that they did. This aspect of interviews is particularly important because of the limited number of survey responses and investigative nature of the study. Although in-depth interviews do not provide the group interaction that focus groups would, they allow participants to share their thoughts without being influenced by the social setting of a group. Similarly, interviews keep participants from merely agreeing with others just to move the session along (Tuten, 2011). They allowed Stat. Comm. professionals to openly discuss their experiences and give their input on the environments that they work among.

The results were analyzed and compared to determine the most common themes in
the responses. The commonality themes reflect the study’s purpose of measuring the importance of diversity in the Strategic Communications industry, specifically with the involvement of Millennial minorities. Measuring the responses received from the participants and how certain aspects of their experience have affected their professional proficiency was the key aspect of interpreting the data.

**Interview Implementation Procedures**

Five interview sessions were conducted: two via email, two by phone, and one in person. In addition to time constraints and feasibility, 10 was chosen as the number of interviews, because it would allow the contribution of an array of participants without it being an overwhelming number for a small study. Each interview lasted 20-30 minutes. Participants were asked to choose which means of interviewing they preferred. All interviews were recorded and stored on a computer. The phone interviews were recorded using an iPhone recorder application and uploaded as audio files. The interview conducted in person was recorded as an audio file on an iPhone recorder application and uploaded as audio files to laptop computer. After interviews were conducted, they were transcribed to ensure accuracy and to use for later analysis.

Interview participants were found through the personal social networks of the researcher and thesis committee members. Participants were also identified through the Reed College of Media Alumnae portal, Delaware State University Alumnae portal, Odwyer PR Firm Database, and recommendations made by other professionals. They were interviewed because they are strategic communications professionals who have experiences in different cultural diversity aspects of the industry.

The research did not require a large number of participants, as interviews only encompassed half of the research, so further sampling methods to recruit more
participants were not necessary.

**In-Depth Interview Guide**

Prior to the interview sessions, participants were emailed a consent form. The participant was asked to sign the form and send it back prior to the interview. Each interview session began with an overview of the consent form, and participants had to verbally give their consent before starting the interview questions. The questions presented to the interview participants reflected the questions asked in the survey and expanded on its themes. The questions were open-ended to allow participants to talk about their experiences in as much depth as they desired, though some questions about basic information about diversity within their career and company, such as what diversity means to them and their company and the commitment they have to the subject. Six specific questions were asked, but some participants spoke in greater depth about certain aspects of diversity, leading to greater numbers of follow-up and probing questions about those topics. The data was collected directly after the questions are asked to the individual, to avoid any confusion or loss of data. At the end of every interview session, participants were given the opportunity to share any final thoughts they had about any of the topics discussed during the interview. Interview transcripts were analyzed using open coding. See Appendix C for the interview consent form and Appendix D for the interviewer’s guide.

**About the Participants**

The interview participants represented a variety of demographic. All participants currently work at Strategic Communications organizations or in Strategic Communications departments. The companies that were represented by the participants
were Fleishman Hillard, Widmeyer Communications, Global Media Outreach, 360 Degree, and the University of Oregon. Three participants were female and two were male. Two participants were African-American women, one was homosexual Caucasian male, one was a Caucasian woman, and another was a Caucasian male.

In an effort to enhance the depth of the responses, the participants represented multiple ethnic backgrounds and range in status within the companies. The status or experience of the professionals varied from junior level to senior and associate/executive. One of the participants was the CEO/Founder of her company and another serves as the Managing Partner at his agency. They had experienced several different aspects of diversity during their time in the Strategic Communications industry. All of them had unique definitions for what diversity meant to them and the company they worked for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Type of Company</th>
<th>Position Held in Company</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>360 Degrees</td>
<td>For-Profit public relations agency</td>
<td>CEO/Founder</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Media Outreach</td>
<td>Non-Profit Organization</td>
<td>Marketing Associate</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleishman Hillard</td>
<td>For-Profit public relations agency</td>
<td>Alfred Fleishman Diversity Fellow</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Oregon</td>
<td>For-Profit</td>
<td>Tenure-track assistant professor of public relations</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widmeyer Communications, Finn Partners Company</td>
<td>For-Profit public relations agency</td>
<td>Managing Partner</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Data Analysis

Transcripts were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. The grounded theory approach is a general research method, which guides a researcher on matters of data collection, where the researcher can use quantitative data or qualitative data of any type. Grounded Theory is a research tool that enables you to seek out and conceptualize the latent social patterns and structures of your area of interest through the process of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As the primary investigator reviewed them, natural themes emerged from the participants’ answers. These themes related to the themes that emerged in the survey responses. These themes were grouped into categories, which were used to organize participants’ responses. The responses were then analyzed to see which categories were most prominent and which needed to be disregarded. The categories were compared to the data from the survey responses to determine whether the recurring themes of the interviews support the themes found in the survey. Ultimately, comparing the themes provided more valuable insight into the research questions than would be gained from using only one method.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications practitioners and scholars. The aim of this research was to more fully understand this growing phenomenon in the industry by gathering information on the experiences of multicultural Strategic Communications professionals and noting their perceptions of diversity within the Strategic Communications industry. The findings also have implications about the importance of diversity, the role of diversity in the career, the effectiveness of hiring, training, and mentorship, organizational leadership, efforts to foster diversity competence, and steps/strategies taken to meet the challenge of diversity. All quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS v. 22.

Survey Results

Millennial

The first research question asked: “How prevalent are Millennial minority college graduates to the Strategic Communications industry?” Two multiple chose questions that allowed participants to chose all that applied: How do you think companies can better engage Millennial minorities entering the Strategic Communications industry? Please choose all that apply. What do you think are the biggest benefits of having Millennial minorities within your company? Please choose all that apply. The first research question was then measured by four five-point Likert-type scales that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly disagree” and two questions that have the option for multiple answers to be chosen.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more culturally diverse because of the Millennial minorities I work with.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the Millennial minorities I work with, I am more encouraged to attend training and learning opportunities to enhance my skillsets.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think Millennial minorities encourage work environments that balance clearly delegated assignments with freedom and flexibility</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Millennial minority in my company has helped improve our companies’ innovation and diverse communications.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In reference to statements one and two, the majority of the respondents “Strongly Agreed” with the statements, which indicated positive attitudes. Out of 42 respondents 17 “Agreed” and 4 “Strongly Agreed”. The majority of respondents “Neither Agreed or Disagreed” to statements two and three. In relation to statement three, 20 respondents stated they were unsure if they would encourage work environments that balance clearly delegated assignments with freedom and flexibility.

The research question was also measured by one other multiple chose survey question, one which asked In which work task/ subject area – or areas – does your organization utilize the skills of Millennials? Please choose all that apply. When asked
about the utilized skills of the Millennials survey participants largely rated social media as a main skill, as shown in Figure 2. More than half of respondents 53% (28) answered “Innovated Techniques and Ideas” to the question of which work subject or task does your organization utilize the skills of Millennials. Conversely, only 42% (22) utilized the Millennials for “Current Technologies (InDesign, Photoshop, iMovie etc.). The utilized work tasks/ subject areas of Millennials that were listed under “Other” were, all aspects of public relations, leadership training, monitoring and evaluation, sales and services, specific campaigns, student employees, marketing and communications skills, Web analytics, SEO, and digital advertising.

![FIGURE 2: The Number Utilized Skills Of Millennials](image)

Millennials have been variously described as enthusiastic, adaptable, entrepreneurial and skilled multitaskers — and as lazy, entitled and unmanageable job hoppers.

Understanding how professional view them industry is an important factor. This was
examined by the four-point Likert-type scale asking: My experiences with Millennial minorities have been favorable. The survey respondents rated their experiences Millennials as favorable, as shown in Figure 3. More than half of the respondents (56% (23)) answered, “Agree”, 24%(10) answered “Strongly Agree”, while 20%(8) answered “Neither Agree nor Disagree” to the question. Only 41 of the 52 survey respondents answered this question.

**FIGURE 3: Experiences With Millennial Minorities**

![Favorable Experiences with Millennial Minorities](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colored Bars</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents (Count)</th>
<th>n=41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reverse Mentoring**

The second question asked: “How effective is reverse mentoring amongst Millennial minority college graduates in Strategic Communications, and what standards are used to measure effectiveness?” This question was explored by six open-ended questions that explores what reverse mentoring means to the individual, the companies reverse mentoring
program process, the organizational model used to conduct the mentoring, if the program is the informal or formal, the success, the evaluation, advice for others who want to succeed with reverse mentoring, and six five-point Likert-type scale questions that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly disagree.”
Effectiveness of Reverse Mentoring Amongst Millennial Minority in the Strategic Communications Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reverse mentoring has been helpful to me.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to use social media technology because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more familiar with website design and development because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more familiar with new innovation techniques and ideas because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more familiar with blogging/vlogging because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more familiar with the current technologies (iMovie, InDesign, Photoshop, etc.) because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the statement, 21 of the respondents “Agreed” with the statement, which indicates positive attitudes. This was the only statement that no participates disagreed with. In reference to statement six, the majority of people said they “Neither Agreed or Disagreed”.

_Evaluating the Success of Reverse Mentoring_

Research question three asked: “In what ways are Strategic Communications professionals evaluating the success of reverse mentoring in the workplace?” One open-ended and a yes or no question was asked to determine if the organization considered their reverse mentoring program successful. For the first question respondents were asked to briefly explain why they considered their program successful and to explain the evaluation process.

The question asked the survey respondents do they consider their reverse mentoring program to be successful. There were a total of 37 responses, but was only able to use n=18 due to the question not being applicable to the other respondents. The 18 that were valid indicated successful reverse mentoring programs. Those responses fell under four major categories. The main value of exploring and coding this question is to improve the current reverse mentoring programs and help establish new effective reverse mentoring programs to improve the Strategic Communications industry. The open-ended responses also allowed professionals to be honest and give feedback for enhancement.
Strategic Communications Professionals Evaluating the Success of Reverse Mentoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
<th>Open-Ended Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Confidence             | The reverse mentoring provided the mentor, mentee, or both the confidence to accomplish a task, enhance their skills, and create relationships, or feel/act more efficient. | - Has brought a sense of confidence to new/young employees by not feeling they are alone in their career/tasks.  
- Yes, numerous mentees have advanced to career positions in sports marketing and sports broadcasting  
- Yes. The reverse mentoring has given some of our employees more confidence in their skills, helped to create relationships and made us more efficient as a whole. |
| Informal Feedback      | The reverse mentorship program has no formal layout or design for those involved. Those who engage with one another may not have been paired together and may meet spontaneously. There may also be no formal evaluation process for the program or meetings. | - I would say it is anecdotally, but as it's not a formal program, but one that occurs organically/spontaneously, it has not been formally evaluated. However, when people learn new things--regardless of who does the teaching/mentoring--it's a plus for the organization  
- Yes. Successful in that the informal feedback helps improve our department, and gives each of us some important additional feedback to help us improve our understanding of the younger generation and of our own strengths/weaknesses in helping reach and influence that generation |
| Mentor/Mentee/Peer     | The mentor and mentee are able to grow, learn, and transfer skills between each other. Their bond allows a positive impact on their progression as professionals. | - Yes, faculty and students learn and grow together  
- Yes, we learn from many of our peers.  
- Yes. The company has benefitted from reaching out to young/new employees for new/fresh information/outlook |
<p>| Growth Together        |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |</p>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yes. There is a transfer of skills that makes the senior staff better</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Yes. We provide individuals (both mentee and mentor) opportunities to learn from one another and it has had a positive impact on our culture and made us an employer of choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need-Based</td>
<td>The mentor and mentee interact with one another when they need to do so, whether it is to update each other on their career progression, learn a new skill, or conduct a mock interview.</td>
<td>• From my personal experience the reverse mentoring takes place is more need-based than anything else • Yes- but it's not an official program – just done as needed</td>
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</table>
The second question asked, “Do you use any type of measurement, either formal or informal, to evaluation the success of the reverse mentoring program?” Based on the 43 out of 51 participants who responded, 39(90%) said “No”, 4(9%) said, “Yes”, and 8 did not reply.

Best Practice Model

Research question four is: “How would Strategic Communications practitioners describe a “best practice” model for implementing a mentoring/reverse-mentoring program in a Strategic Communications workplace?” This variable was measured with three open-ended questions that directly asked the participant to describe their idea of a “best practice” model for a reverse mentoring program and to give advice to other who want to succeed with reverse mentoring. It then asked the participant do they train the mentors, mentees, or both. If so, how do they train the individuals?

The question asked the survey respondents to describe a “best practice” model for implementing a reverse-mentoring program in a Strategic Communications workplace. There were a total of 27 responses, but only 24 could be used due to the question not being applicable to the other respondents. The 24 that were valid indicated “best practice” models. Those responses fell under nine major categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Code Descriptions</th>
<th>Open-Ended Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Benefits Both Parties Involved | The mentor and mentee each have a devolved interest and accountability in the success of the outcome. Both parties involved will learn and grown from each other. | • A professional relationship that both parties have a vested interest and accountability in the success of the outcome.  
• One that provides benefit/value to both parties  
• One that resulted in both parties learning from each other. |
| Establish a Curriculum, Assignments, and Prescribed Interactions | Develop topics to discuss during meetings, task that will be completed, and a meeting date/time that works for everyone involved | • Establishing a series of meetings dedicated to the mentoring program  
• Formal assignments, prescribed interactions, set curriculum  
• Needs regular scheduling. |
| Formal Mentoring | Those who engage with one another may have been paired together and have a structured layout and design for their reverse mentor program. There may also be a formal evaluation process for the program or meetings. | • Formally assigning reverse mentorship roles so that the junior employee is able to take ownership and gain respect of upper-management  
• Our methods may not work as we have only 10 people on our staff. Probably something more formal would work best for a larger org.  
• To actually formalize one and should be mandatory once less tech savvy employee has been identified. |
| Formalized Evaluations | Evaluations are conducted to gain an understanding of the successes, limitations, and to measure whether the program is making a difference in the lives of those involved. | • Objectively monitored/assessed.  
• Needs to be formalized and measured |
| Informal/"Just-in-Time" Mentoring | The program has no formal layout or design for those involved. Those who engage with one another may not have been paired together may meet spontaneously, or as needed. There may also be no formal evaluation process for the program or meetings. | • We are working on expanding mentoring as a tool for best practices. You describe, "just-in-time". Just in time is best practice for addressing urgent matters. Formal mentoring does not really work if the parties are forced into the relationship. They re just going through the motions  
• Informal, one on one in a casual setting. |
<p>| Involvement of Senior | Engage the senior executives and | • Senior managers have to be open minded, and it is hard to mandate that and even harder to teach it -- you either |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>managers in the reverse mentoring program.</th>
<th>are or you are not • Senior leadership mandates that top executives at the company (including themselves) take on a reverse mentor.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching the Mentor and Mentee</td>
<td>Pair mentors and mentees together who have similar career goals, life experiences, values, and etc.</td>
<td>• Should be structured (i.e. intentional pairings, based on either similarities or differences) and ongoing, • One that is organized and strategically set up with mentees and mentors who have identified a need • I think a best practice is assessing the skill gaps of both parties. This seems like a great first step in making a mutually beneficial match. • I asked my mentor to mentor me, so I would suggest that those who are seeking mentorships to go out and figure out what the senior people in their organizations do and align themselves with the ones doing the work they'd like to do. • Being strategic about the partnerships/mentorships (fitting the right people together) and providing the right outlet for it to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets Business/Client Needs</td>
<td>Align the goals and objectives of the program to the criteria of the company, cliental need, and industry advancement.</td>
<td>• One that meets the program criteria and is implemented consistently throughout the organization • In our environmental we would have to look at what our parallel institutions are king and assess those benchmarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>Pair mentors and mentees of similar interest in small groups of 2-5 for interaction and exchange of skills/knowledge</td>
<td>• Creating two-to-five people teams and tasking them according to their talents (i.e. one on particular targeted constituency, one on regional media, one on social) has proved successful • I don't believe I've seen any formal models. However, if I were to start a formal program, I would likely hold a mixer within the organization of people who were open/interested in participating, and allow pairings or small groups to naturally coalesce. The organization must be authentic in its support for these gatherings and for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The question asked the survey respondents to give advice to others who want to succeed with reverse mentoring in a Strategic Communications. There were a total of 34 responses, but was only able to use 29 due to the question not being applicable to the other respondents. The 29 that were valid indicated advice for how to succeed in reverse mentoring. Those responses fell under nine major categories.

**Tips to Succeed In Reverse Mentoring**

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<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Code Descriptions</th>
<th>Open-Ended Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be Open</td>
<td>The mentor and mentee have to both have an open mind set about the learning experience.</td>
<td>• Older employees need to see the value in learning from digital natives.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Older employees must be encouraged to be open to younger professionals and not feel threatened by admitting a lack of knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Go into it with an open mind. No holes barred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Being open to suggestions on both ends. It is not always easy to take advice from someone younger or in a lower position. Taking advice both ways will help from the superior feeling inferior, and therefore pulling away from the mentorship relationship. Everyone can learn from each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Be open, but recognize that with technology, the younger or more junior person may not know how to strategically use the technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both parties involved have to be</td>
<td>• The mentor being humble enough to acknowledge how the relationship has helped without being worried about lack of knowledge having a negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Be Humble Not Arrogant | Willing to acknowledge how the relationship will help, without having a pessimistic demeanor about the experience. | Impact on their employment position
- Take it seriously and give it the time and energy you would other forms of mentorship
- Younger professionals must understand that this particular expertise does not mean they are experienced or superior in all facts of the organization.
- Millennials need to learn and practice patience with older, less tech-savvy people.
- One should not feel as though they will be punished for being open and transparent in their feedback. |
| Benefits Both Parties Involved | The mentor and mentee each have a devolved interest and accountability in the success of the outcome. Both parties involved will learn and grown from each other. | Be proactive rather than reactive concerning your program which will ultimately benefit both the mentor's company and mentee's career prospects
- Ensure that the mentoring is happening two-way, as you want both parties to buy in and feel that they play an important role and have something to contribute. |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | Be sure to have set goals and objectives to create a well-rounded program that will foster growth for the mentor and mentee. | Try to establish formal measurement of outcomes.
- Teaching and learning go hand-in-hand; it's important to share knowledge and emphasis continuing education within the organization.
- Identify, clearly, the specific knowledge that he or she would like to learn about BEFORE the engagement happens
- Expand the tools and range in how it is implemented. Mentoring as a leadership, preparation tool needs a persistent overhaul
- Be sure to explain that this program has been created to make each person more knowledgeable and better well rounded. |
To examine whether the Strategic Communications organization were training the mentor, the mentee, or both survey respondents were asked to check all that applied in reference to the training initiatives. The higher the scores the more training the professional received, which results in better mentorship for both parties involved. There were a total of 44 responses of out of 51 respondents.
The 11 of the 12 respondents who stated that they or their company trained their mentors and mentees explained how they trained them in an open-ended question. All 11 responses were applicable to the question and were able to be utilized. Those responses fell five under major categories.
# How to Train Your Mentors and Mentees

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<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
<th>Open-Ended Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hands-On Training</td>
<td>Active personal involvement in the task being learned or taught.</td>
<td>• Hands on work for a management training program with direction from more senior managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mentor works with mentees to enhance mentee skills in writing, layout and strategic thinking.</td>
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<td>On-the-Job Training</td>
<td>A form of training taking place in a normal working situation through seminars, group work with other employees, or other activities within the work environment.</td>
<td>• On-the-job learning/training; some formal skill training</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Through on-the job plus PD seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-On-One/In-Person Training</td>
<td>Training between two people-formal or informal</td>
<td>• One-on-one ad hoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal and informal leadership and mentoring training. Online and in person</td>
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<td>• Our Dir. Human Resources has a training program and individually trains each person on her own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other training techniques utilized.</td>
<td>• Exposure to media marketing skills and sports broadcast operations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• They start off in junior positions in teams with others and they grow as they gain experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars/Webinars/Workshops</td>
<td>A live meeting that takes place over the web, in-person, or in groups. The meeting can be a presentation, discussion, demonstration, or instructional session.</td>
<td>• Webinars</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshops</td>
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Interview Results

Diversity

The interview participants were all asked the same questions and allotted free range of description for their answers. Some participants found diversity to mean more than working or affiliating with people who look or sound different than them. One interviewee said, “…To me diversity is not people who look different, but people who come from different social economic backgrounds, people who grew up in different cultures and places, because with that you gain a different worldview.

If everyone grew up in the same kind of place you don’t really get all the nuisances of all the cultural groups and cultural experiences in life. To me that’s what diversity is.”

Another defined diversity in their company by, saying:

It means that we’re bringing a diverse set of perspectives to our client changes. Diverse can be measured on a number of scales, of course there’s the diversity that comes with the racial ethic backgrounds, but there’s also diversity in age, diversity socio economic status, and diversity in nationalities. So, when we are looking at our relative success I trying to create a diverse work force we look at all of those factors.

Others, however seen diversity as a simpler factor, but with more commitment to change in the industry through their companies efforts. One interviewee said:

Diversity is at the heart of American business. As a small business owner, I hire employees and interns from a wide-ranging population in my community and these are individuals from different ethnic groups. I really do try and “hire” various people from other races, other than Caucasian. I believe that when different people with different backgrounds come together, it culminates in interesting conversations.

The Role of Diversity in your Career and Job/Client Relationships

Among the participants accept one; diversity played a role in shaping their careers and job/client relationships. Many felt that there was no way diversity could not play as role in their careers and lives. One participant who felt diversity played a role in
their everyday life stated:

Before I worked at Fleishman I was in graduate school and before graduate school I worked full-time as a reporter. In my academic career and as an undergraduate diversity has been driven the majority of my decisions in life just as being an advocate for social justice and racial equality. As a professional and as a reporter who covered diverse communities and under represented communities in West Virginia, to my selection of graduate school, the to my selection of my fellowship at Fleishman diversity has played a role in all of my decisions thus far. In my professional role at Fleishman, which was my first agency job out of school, diversity did play a part in that because I was selected because I’m a diverse individual in the industry… diversity has definitely played a part in my professional life from its infancy to now and it will continue.

The role diversity plays in the lives of Strategic Communications professionals is an important factor in how different organizations reach global clients, interact with employees, and expand their horizons beyond the norm. Those individuals and companies who felt strongly about diversity’s role made a conscious effort to continue expanding the cross-cultural communications within the industry. In response to the question of the role diversity played in her career and job/client relationships, an interviewee said:

So I think a lot about cross-cultural communications, because I see that a lot of companies want a strategic campaign or something like that and they realize we have to talk to different audiences and we have to talk to this particular group. But they’re not quite sure how to do that. I can see how diversity plays a role in the knowledge I have that to be in kind of inherit, because I am a minority that it will help the company come up with messaging and other things that really will resonate with the audience.

Overall, interview participants tended to see diversity as more than a racial issue, but more as an opportunity to grow, learn, and expand their expertise about their colleagues and cliental.

*Efforts to Foster Diversity Competence and Understanding*

The interview subjects all provided different manners of fostering diversity
competence and understanding within and outside of their companies. Some companies were extensive in their efforts and others not as much. A participant and her company assure that all of their reading materials can reach several audiences through multiple language translations and media outlets.

So we’re constantly making sure the communications we’re sending out to different people in different parts if the world, are not just translated verbatim from the English language, because that doesn’t translate the culture. We make sure that we’re constantly looking at things, analyzing them, and saying ok we have to change this or learn a little bit more about what people want/are like in this region. We’re constantly studying that and pulling from people who have grown up in different countries, because they know first hand, it’s really beneficial and great.

Other companies took more of a traditional approach by posted job listings on African American websites and colleges. These participants companies were able to connect with some diverse candidates, while other who expanded their network through diversity fellowship programs and partner-in-training programs were able to reach broader audiences. One participant stated that they have a client who pushes them to have diversity in their company:

Washington, D.C. and public relations is notorious for having a very White workforce and it seems like when a high caliber candidate is from a community of color comes along, everyone wants him or her because there such a thirst for more high quality candidates from communities of color. We actually have to fill out a form every year that does a census of how many members of racial minorities or communities of color we have at senior levels in the firm, mid levels, and at administrative levels.

The interview participants had similar views to survey respondents on the importance of diversity efforts. Although few engaged in extensive efforts, they make attempts to diverse their pool of job candidates and interns. One interviewee discussed the importance of diversity efforts to companies and their abilities to connect to cliental:

In terms of Fleishman, I think one of the things they did was establish the
fellowship. It’s very new, Fleishman established the Diversity Fellowship in 2011, so there has only been four classes thus far. It started out in only a few offices, but now it does suppose to be in all of the domestic offices in the U.S. So, I think that was kind of their first and biggest push. In my mind and my knowledge that’s their main push, but of course trying to bring in more diverse clients is something they’re always trying to do, but you lose you’re marketability to reach diverse audiences if you don’t have diverse people to work for you. Its kind of like, we want you but we don’t have he ability to meet your needs. So what we do a lot of times is we’ll handle a certain part of an account, but if it has anything to do with a minority community we can do the strategy, but when it come down to the audience outreach we have to out source it because we can’t do it.

Through internships or fellowships, Millennial minorities are able to feel involved and as if they are apart of the company they work for. Not all companies sought information about how to connect with diverse job candidates in different ways, but the level of communication that needs to be conveyed in order to attract and retain more diversity within companies takes time, effort, and funding. The increased levels of communication and outreach were important to develop relationships with potential minorities.

Organizational Leadership and HR take a More Active Role in Diversity

All interview participants, except one, stated that the work of human resources (HR) is one of the most important roles in increasing diversity with the Strategic Communications. Regarding the HR role in diversity initiatives, an interviewee who felt strongly about the HR involvement said:

You know, I think HR plays a huge role in the diversity of an organization. I think that a lot of times what we hear about, just as professionals, we hear about the way you can get your foot in the door through your network. But I kind of challenge that a little bit because sometimes I see that there might be one person from one university at a company and if that university wasn’t diverse and if they continue to recommend people from their network and university who all look like them and came from places that they did. I think it all turns out that the office won’t be that diverse. If HR makes it a point to go into new markets, go visit different universities and not just the ones their employees already came
from you’ll actually find new pools of talent and cultural knowledge you might not have on your team yet. I think HR can definitely play a role in that way.

Although HR is an important role to reach diverse job candidates of various minority backgrounds, interview participants also stressed the importance of the allocation of resources to cast a broader net to attract diverse individuals.

I think the first step from an HR talent development standpoint is making it a priority that when applying their strategies to applicants, whether they be for admin. or senior administration diverse candidates are always in the pool. For them that may mean casting a border net, which means more money, maybe including other universities in your search, or take trips to other parts of the country that you don’t unusually pull candidates from. It’s about the allocation of resources! I get really agitated when interns come in every year or every cycle and none of them are of color. That to me sends that message that you’re saying that there are not candidates of color, these are the best candidates that we could find and that’s why they’re here. That’s not that case! You spend millions upon millions of dollars hiring annually, make one or two of those people per year from a diverse background! Stop with the nonsense! As people of color I know there are qualified candidates from all walks of life, they don’t all have to be White women and gay White men that get brought into these positions. When we start really pulling punches and start having those types of serious conversations with action put behind them, then we’ll start to see more changes.

The aspect of the funding allocation and casting a broader net helps to demonstrate the importance of diversity in the Strategic Communications industry. Also, utilizing other media outlets, word-of-mouth, diverse career links, and traveling to different colleges and universities will help entice different professionals. Another important topic that was discussed by several of the interviewees was diversity training for current and new employees. With the implementation of diverse employees, the use of diversity training (DT) has been identified as the method to cause individual-level change across attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions in order to influence organizational performance (Romanenko, 2011). This element of recruiting is critical when it come to retention of the minority employees who may be recruited into a
One participant said:

There’s no support system or any kind of training around cultural consciousness. You can’t just grab a bunch of people from diverse backgrounds and throw them into a homogenous environment, and say, “Work”, which everyone else around them is business as usual. You have to invest in training your current staff on how to work with diverse candidates. It’s something that should be done together, but nine times out of ten people of color are used to being the minority, so they already know how to work with y’all. You need to learn how to be in a workplace where you can respect us not just as other professionals, but the difference of opinion. People communicate differently and as communicators you would think would know that, but they don’t.

In this industry time is more important than money. People don’t want to spend an hour going to diversity training with “X” who works in publishing. But at the end of the day that may be what keeps “Rashidah” here. You have to identify that someone is coming in from a different entry point and with different experiences. You have to identify the institutional systems of oppression and inequality that shape everything in this country, not just business, but everything. That has to be called out because it all effects the way we do business and all industries, but that’s where it gets dicey. When you start talking about White privilege and how it affects our ability to reach our clients, then people shut down.

Steps/Strategies Taken to Meet the Challenge of Diversity and the Successes

Interviewees were compelled to meet the challenge of diversifying the Strategic Communications industry in several unique ways. Some took a conventional approach while others made it a point to incorporate their strategies into their personal life and career. For example, one the participants said:

Every work environment is diverse; whenever you gather two or more people together, you're going to have diversity. It's imperative to have clearly defined goals, to set a tone of mutual respect and understanding, and to have zero tolerance for disrespectful, harassing and/or abusive behavior, any of which can come in the form of passive-aggressiveness. It takes real emotional intelligence as a leader to ferret out what is happening between individuals in a work team.

Another step that was taken by a participant was having open, honest
communication about everyday topics with diverse individual. Listen and learning from a new perspective can allow people to interact on another level, while enlightening each other from different points of view. One interviewee explained the beauty of conversing with diverse professionals.

Well I think, me personally I talk to someone and we can be discussing anything, the news or anything like that because a part of my worldview and where I come from affects how I feel. It’s really interesting that we can share with one another. What is it that makes us feel that way or what has been our viewpoint on things and what we’ve seen in life? You have the ability to learn something new about someone and it helps you to understand who they are, and how/why other people may feel that way. So I think it’s a matter of that comradery of getting to know people on the job you’re able to share from you’re personal experiences and it helps other personalizes how different groups might view things.

On a similar note, a participant who had been involved in mentoring felt that it was one of most successful strategies she’s experienced:

What keeps those of us who are able to stay is mentorship, have a mentor. I only had one and she was touch and go as well at points, but having her was what gave me the resolve to stay as long as I did. The fellowship is a year I stayed seven and a half months. Finding that one person who advocates for you is what keeps us there, even if it’s somebody on a completely different team than your one. Finding somebody who you feel identifies with you that will listen to you, support you, and will advocate for you. Its helpful for people who come into the firm at entry or mid-level, they’ll pair them with somebody in the company or they find them a mentor.

Overall, the interview participants and their companies utilize several different steps and strategies to attract a diverse pool of minority candidates. The interviews show that there are Strategic Communications professionals who support the expansion of diversity of minorities entering the industry. Strategies Communication minorities professional are looking for companies where they can be treated equally, received support, and work among other professionals who are trained and knowledgeable about the possibilities they can bring to the company. Participants valued the different aspects
of diversity, but they had common ground in feeling that diversity is an essential aspect to the Strategic Communications field and deserving of more attentiveness. This factor is the driving force behind diversity. A summary of key findings can be found in Table 4.

### Table 4: Summary of Key Findings

- Diversity means different ethnic backgrounds, various cultural beliefs, social economic backgrounds, religions, and people who grew up in different cultures and places.

- Diverse working environment means that there will be different opinions – as a result of different upbringings and culture.

- HR plays a huge role in the diversity of organizations.

- HR needs to cast a border net to attract more diverse job candidates,

- We have to invest a lot of time, effort, and money into diversifying companies.

- Invest in diversity training for current staff on how to work with diverse candidates.

- Millennials should have at least one person (mentor/coach/role model) who advocates for them. Someone who identifies with them and someone who is willing to listen and provide support.

- In order to have diverse cliental you have to have diverse employees to meet/understand their needs.

- Continuously reevaluate the efforts and successes of companies to increase diversity.

- There is a thirst for more high quality candidates from communities of color.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study used an online survey (n=52) and a series of in-depth interviews (n=5) to examine the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications Millennial minority practitioners and scholars. Participants in this study demonstrated that cultural diversity within the Strategic Communications industry is important for various reasons, such as global expansion, cliental relationships, and obtaining different perspectives. It is apparent from the survey and interview responses that Strategic Communications professionals have similar and different views about the hiring, training, and mentoring of Millennial minorities. They also all viewed the relevance of diversity and reverse mentoring in the same positive fashion. Some see diversity as a way to connect with people who come from different social economic backgrounds, and those who grew up in different cultures and places in order to gain a different worldview. Many look to Millennial minorities for knowledge in areas, such as social media and innovative ideas. For some Strategic Communications professionals, the viewpoint of cultural diversity comes from personal life experiences and company values. For some professionals diversity has been apart of their lives before they entered the industry, so their passion to increase the number of minorities is inevitable. For many Strategic Communications professionals, the hiring, training, and mentor outreach is the most significant aspect of obtaining and retaining Millennial minorities in their companies.

The Importance of Diversity in Strategic Communications

Diversity was very important to the Strategic Communications professionals. Strategic Communications organizations have been under fire for their lack of cultural
and ethically diversity (Gallicano, 2013). The lack of compromise of diversity has been deeply rooted in the industry, which has hindered the structural minority pipeline of diversity for practitioners (Blake-Beard, Murrell, A., & Thomas D., 2006). Contrary to the lack of diversity within industry throughout previous years, many professionals value the minorities that they work with and around. In this instance however diversity may have differing influence on some professionals based on their personal and/or career experiences, goals, and objectives. The role Millennial minorities play to the progression and innovation is prevalent to the Strategic Communications industry. In this study, the most popular utilized skills of Millennials minorities were social media and innovative techniques and designs. These and other skills have been motivating factors in hiring younger generations.

Although some may have different views about hiring Millennial minorities, in this study more than a half of the survey respondents had favorable experiences with Millennial minorities. Strategic Communications professionals see there being a large benefit in having these individuals in their organizations. According to the interview results, many felt that they promote cultural diversity, create a good work/life balance, and they have positive team building skills. These are key aspects that will help expand a company’s abilities and knowledge about their current or potential cliental. By acknowledging these benefits more professionals may be encouraged to hire a more diverse pool of employees.

The Role of Diversity in your Career and Job/Client Relationships

Interview participants also heavily acknowledged the role diversity plays in their careers and client relations. Previous research represents a shift to valuing the
importance of differences in the workplace, rather than suppressing and denying the issue. Becoming a more diverse company creates a better working environment that allows free flowing innovative ideas that can contribute to the growth and development of the organization and the individual. Following Kellner’s (2004) theoretical approach of Cultural Studies, participants desired to indulge in diverse communications and professional relationships. These actions empower people to gain sovereignty over their culture and invoke change for a better society and life.

The results support this theory, as they demonstrate an aspiration for Strategic Communications companies and professionals to broaden the diversity of their employee candidates. All interview participants had similar views toward the improvement of their company’s diversity, they acknowledged their companies efforts to increase diversity as well as their own. They did this by saying they pushed their human resources office to pull more diverse resumes, they reach out to new diverse cliental, and some diversified their personal network of colleagues. Two of the interviewee stated that they had diversity internships/fellows and jobs after graduating college that allowed them to see how different industries are integrating diverse voices that can communicate or advocate better for different groups. Participants who were happy with their diverse work environments, cliental work, and respect given to them at their companies remained employed longer.

**The Effectiveness of Hiring, Training, and Mentorship for AHANA Minorities**

In addition to feeling and understanding the importance of diversity within the Strategic Communications industry, the influence of inclusion demonstrates the role of culture in organizations. Many successful diversity efforts have been driven by strategic
diversity initiatives, such as recruiting, retention, external partnership, staffing and infrastructure. Having people of color who comes from different places, speak different languages, and who have experienced different things brings strengthen to a company. Minorities have experienced oppression and struggles that superior cultures have not, so the demeanor and approach to certain life and career situations may be unique. An interviewee stated,

When you have people of color in leadership positions we’re the ones who are able to kick down doors to make progress, because to have gotten there you have to have a certain professional demeanor, strength, and courage. So, we have a tendency to make good leaders because of what it takes for us to get there in the first place.

In order to obtain the strengthen of these individuals the hiring net has to be cast further to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. Innovative approaches should be implemented in order reach this population of professionals. Human resources can become more involved by expanding the college/universities network to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), developing a relationship with the United Negro College Fund, the different cultural branches of the Bill and Melinda Gate Millennial Scholars Program, or assuring that they attend career fairs in low culturally diverse neighborhoods. These tactics could help drawl in more Millennial minorities.

It was seen through the survey and interview results that many of the employees are not allotted the opportunity of diversity training. This is a key aspect in the retention
of those new hires. If there is no support shown from current employees and executive staff people do not feel welcomed or apart of a team. The research showed that being among Millennial minorities is a favorable experience, but the engagement of the senior employees helps them feel more at ease in the new environment. As stated before, minorities are used to adjusting to their environments, but often times the current employees do not take the time or effort to adjust to them. Another key factor that was discussed in the interview was the benefit of having a mentor. One interviewee explained that she was pushed to apply for her job at Fleishman Hillard because of her mentor. She was also coached on how to approach the interview process and provided her some tips about how to handle working at a large agency.

What keeps those of us who are able to stay is mentorship, have a mentor. I only had one and she was touch and go as well at points, but having her was what gave me the resolve to stay as long as I did…. she’s a Senior Vice President and partner at Fleishman D.C. The fellowship is a year I stayed seven and a half months.

Having a mentor encouraged her to stay longer at Fleishman as a Fellow. She did not complete the full-term of the diversity fellowship, but was able to stay half of the term. She explained that while working in D.C. in the pubic affairs office she did not have a mentor within the department and she was the only professional who identified herself as African American.

I didn’t have a mentor within my public affairs team, I had the other Fellow who was Muslim, and she was awesome. She was Egyptian, but didn’t identify as a person of color. We were Fellows together and she did identify with some of the
stuff, but as a Black woman I had one mentor, one confident that I could go to for support and encouragement, which was Patricia.

The company did not hold to their promise of providing a mentor and a work environment where she would work with other men and women of color. These types of situation tend to deter people from continuing their professional careers with companies. These are common issues that human resources managers and senior executives can take action on to better their work environments for their current and future employees.

**Organizational leadership and HR take a More Active Role in Diversity**

The survey and interview results that addressed the importance of human resources and organizational leadership becoming more involved in the diversity initiatives were closely aligned with the research result expectations. One of the key findings from the interviews, was “HR plays a huge role in the diversity of organizations.” This statement was proven true several times as survey respondents stated the importance of hiring diverse employees and training current and new employees.

These executives professional should understand diversity is something necessary for the business strive. The lack of involvement from both of these parties can cause a hindrance to the progression of the company. The involvement of senior executives was commented on heavily in the open-ended question that addressed the topic of the “best practice” model for implementing a mentoring/reverse mentoring program in a Strategic Communications workplace. One interviewee stated, “senior managers have to be open minded, and it is hard to mandate that and even harder to teach it -- you either are or you are not.” This comment addresses the difficulties
companies face trying to get some senior executives involved in the tactics being use to
strengthen diverse and bridge the gap between the multiple generations in the workforce.
If the leaders of a company are not willing to be open to change, innovation, and
progression the other employees are more likely to be reluctant as well.

During an interview, one of the interviewees stated that “It would certainly help
to have an ambassador from HR and/or administration provide objective counsel on how
certain decisions are made, how faculty-wide meetings are conducted, how candidates
are recruited/hired/on boarded, how funds are allocated, etc.” Communications between
these parties is necessary to keep everyone informed about the happenings within the
organization. If the current and future employees are educated about certain topics such
as, how recruited/hired/on boarded and how funds are allocated there could be fewer
discrepancies about how these situations are handled. Also, other employees could be
allotted the chance to provide input on how to reach, connect, and interact with diverse
groups of professionals.

**Efforts to Foster Diversity Competence and Understanding**

In addition to the involvement of senor executives and human resource
managers, the fostering of diversity competence and understanding demonstrates the
importance of the role of educating those within the company about diversity. Their
understanding of having a diverse organization has provided many companies success.
No company utilizes the same exact tactics and tools, be that of diversity
fellowships/internships, trainings, seminars/webinars, open company discussions, or
even making communications materials available in different languages.

Diversity competence allows Strategic Communications professionals the ability
to further expand their knowledge and network for colleagues and/or clients. It also enables professionals to have social interaction with the opportunities available for them to grow as professionals and as a company. This way, professionals can turn their topics of conversation into real results by conveying their ideas and aspirations into a positive outcome, which will make a difference in the industry for future generations. During an interview, an interviewee mentioned the interaction between all employees, especially senior level executives, to help promote awareness and develop efforts to foster competence about diversity in the Strategic Communications industry. One of the interviewees stated, “It really comes down to folks looking to senior levels to for guide about if something is a priority and if we’re never talking about it, then staff get the message that it’s only important when someone else brings it up.” Through the communications and efforts of everyone within a company, diversity can help cultivate a community of employee who work well together and provide great services to cliental.

Internships and fellowship are other suitable opportunities to enrich diversity within Strategic Communications organizations. Offering these types of programs allows younger generations to learn about the industry first-hand, they are able to do work side-by-side with professionals, work with clients, enhance their writing and research abilities, all while getting expanding their network. Many college students take advantage of these opportunities and apply to work for a period of time at a company. Companies like Fleishman Hillard and Widmeyer have diversity fellowship and training programs that allot future graduates to work with diverse cliental in different branches if the industry. These fellowships and partner-in-training program are beneficial only if those current employees running the program stick to the main objectives and provide
what was promised to those fellows or interns. During an interview, a past Fleishman Hillard Diversity Fellow discussed her how the program did not meet all of the objectives they stated would happen during her time as a Fellow.

I had expectations of the fellowship in term of what I would be able to do or how my voice would be heard in term of discussing some of the issues we just glazed over. I was able to do some of that and some of it I wasn’t, in terms of being able to use my background to affect the client I had, was able to do that a little. As someone who was sought out to help the firm establish more relationships with people of color, different organization in the community, and bring in different clients there were talks about that, it was all something I would have maybe gotten to do, but I didn’t not get to do during the fellowship; which was slightly disappointing. That was supposed to be apart of it…

These types of letdowns can deter young professionals from continuing their fellowships or recommending it to others in the future. There are young, eager Millennial monitories that are skilled in several areas and have life experiences that can be utilized to connect to the needs of cliental, but if they are not being hired or not given the task, the work may be outsourced or a client could be lost. These are issues that can be prevented if there impact of diversity was made more prevent to companies and their employees. Every employee from the CEO of the company to the administrative assistant has to be on board to help these programs and initiatives work. Having junior and senior employees work closely with the fellows and interns can help improve the recruitment process and diversify the candidates being selected for the programs. The Fleishman Hillard interviewee discussed how during her time as a Fellow she seem very
few men and women of color selected to be interns.

When we (Fleishman Hillard) bring in interns a big problem in the industry is you have internship coordinators who are junior level. Very few firms have internship coordinators who are maybe a senior account executive. So these are young people bringing in students from schools that they identify with and who are bringing in students who they identify with personally. At Fleishman every intern that came into the program while I was there, I was there for three cycles of interns, none of them were of color, three of them were male (we bring in six each cycle), and they were all from predominately White institutions that are usually for students who are more economically stable. So we had a lot from Georgetown University, George Washington University, Brigham Young University, Utah University, and New York University. All of these schools it cost a lot of money to go there!

The lack of diversity within Strategic Communications is an on-going issue, but if professionals are attempting to make a difference and everyone is not helping the efforts will fall to the wayside. It was obvious from the research interviews that it is difficult for these programs to stick strong to the promises and main focus of the program. One interviewee stated that they have to have diversity within their organization or they risk losing one of their main clients, but he also spoke about the difficulties senior executive face with human resource managers and the hiring of diverse candidates.
You know this is where I wish the story were different, we on the account side, staff and managers, have had to push HR to work harder at recruiting more diverse candidates. So it’s been almost backwards, if you thought the HR folks were the most committed to recruiting a diverse workforce that’s not been our experience. We’ve actually had to really push hard to say, “No all the resumes I’m seeing do not represent a diverse slate of candidates”.

Seeing senior executives get involved and push for more diversity is a step in the right direction. Not only does this encouragement help employees spread knowledge of the diversity, but it also allows more ingenuity to occur and strategic diversity plans to come to life.

**Steps/Strategies Taken to Meet the Challenge of Diversity and the Successes**

Overall, there were several strategic steps discussed that are currently being taken to meet the challenge of diversity in the Strategic Communications industry. Though some of the steps being taken were fairly new, they are still making a difference. Furthermore, strategies played a large role in the type of recruitment being done, who was recruited, and how employees of color are and are not retained in companies.

Some of the traditional strategies that were mentioned in the survey and interviews were:

- Posted job listings on African American sites and colleges
- Set a tone of mutual respect and understanding
- Get to know your colleagues
- Zero tolerance for disrespectful, harassing, and/or abusive behavior
- Word-of-Mouth

Some of the innovative strategies that were mentioned in the surveys and interviews were:
• Open discussion with new people from different backgrounds
• Having communications pieces written in multiple languages
• Recruit from different colleges/universities (HBCUs, smaller schools, schools people from within the company do/did not attend, etc.)
• Diversity fellowships and internships that focus on culturally diverse cliental
• Senior and junior executives assist with interns and fellows
• Provide mentors/reverse mentoring
• Diversity training for all employees

These steps and strategies play a role in the increase of awareness and efforts that can be taken to improve the lack of diversity. Utilizing different techniques can draw attention from those AHANA graduates who are skilled in unique innovative programing, social media tactics, web design, graphic design, and other areas of Strategic Communications. Several of the survey respondents felt that you have to be open to these new ideas for them to work, “Try it and evolve it as you do it.” Having a positive attitude toward the changes that can occur within the industry can make the adjustment easier for everyone involved.

Reverse Mentorship

When discussing the benefits and reasoning for reverse mentoring, participants in this study reiterated the themes discussed above: the importance of diversity, the role of diversity in your career, the effectiveness of hiring, training, and mentorship, organizational leadership, efforts to foster diversity competence, and steps/strategies taken to meet the challenge of diversity. Some had not heard of reverse mentoring, others utilized it unknowing, and some companies had reverse mentoring programs in place for their employees.

Many who were involved with the programs felt that they were successful, but
could use more structure and an evaluation process for the participants. Respondents felt “confident” and “efficient” in their skillsets since their participation in the program. The reverse mentor program helped to create relationships among employees within all levels of the company. The relationship allowed the mentor and mentee to learn from one another and have a positive impact on their culture. A survey respondent stated that being apart of their reverse mentoring program made them an “employer of choice”. This point, in particular, is important for the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Two-way communication depends on the willingness of both parties to be open with one another, in order for a relationship to foster and growth to occur. By being transparent about the progress of reverse mentorship, employers strengthen the benefits of continuous mentorship and advancement of Millennial minorities.

The pairing process was a key factor found in the research that will result in the success of the reverse mentoring program, “Find someone you can relate to, for a variety of reasons: social/ethnic/cultural background, or someone who understands the value of mentoring in the long run.” These types of professional relationships offer a chance to engage and grow with an individual in the industry who seeks the same professional growth.

**Strengths**

The key strength of this study is that it used longstanding, well-defined methods of public relations and advertising research (surveys and in-depth interviews) to measure the experiences of multicultural Strategic Communications professionals and noting their perceptions of diversity within the Strategic Communications industry. Through the nature of diversity, industry professionals’ contribution is essential to the sustainability
of the bridging the generational gap for Millennial minorities.

This research will help examined the challenges and opportunities diversity has for Strategic Communications practitioners and scholars. This study showed the advantages of having ethically diverse employees in the Strategic Communications industry, which will strengthen the pipeline of diversity for future minorities who enter the field. By gathering information on the diversity and reverse mentoring, it can be determined what steps the industry would need to take to enhance these initiatives within the profession.

Another significant strength is the triangulation of the research. By using a qualitative and a quantitative method, the study gains reliability. Because the data is based on participants’ answers to questions, it may essentially contain respondent bias. Method triangulation helps correct respondent bias, as the two methods add support to each other. The survey helps structure the content of the interviews, while the interviews help explain the survey results. Using both methods gives a broader and deeper base of comprehension than could be specified by either method on its own.

A third strength is that the study had a diverse population of participants. Survey respondents represented every branch of Strategic Communications, and interview participants represented five different agencies/organizations. The amount of years the survey participants have been in the industry is diverse as well. The diversity of the interview subjects represented both sexes, two cultural groups, the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender (LBGT) community, and a range of employee statuses. The only disparity in the survey was that there were 52 valid survey responses out of 102. This
issue could likely be corrected with a larger number of participants.

Limitations

The study also has some limitations. First, it is limited by the fact that it is focused on Millennial minorities; there is not currently a plethora of information on these individual as a part of the Strategic Communications industry. The questions in both the survey and interview guide were written to explore participants’ attitudes toward Millennial minorities, involvement in reverse mentoring, and diversity within the Strategic Communications industry. Although survey and interview participants may not have had a lot experiences with Millennial minorities and the diversity in the industry, their responses indicate the experiences that did have were successful and favorable. Participants might view the reverse mentoring differently in retrospect than those who have not had been apart of it, either formally or informally. By examining what influences reverse mentoring and Millennial monitories have on the Start. Comm. industry, this study intends to measure how these innovative techniques and individuals can help improve the profession. On the other side of measuring participant’s attitudes, future research could evaluate the success of reverse mentoring using a formalized method.

Furthermore, the number of people surveyed and interviewed is fairly low, which could have affected the results. For example, a study with a greater number of respondents may find diversity to be more important to those of a lower income bracket. Because formalized reverse mentoring and evaluating the success of the programs, is a relatively new aspect to companies, the number of people who have not partaken in reverse mentoring compared to those who have is fairly high. Maybe as time continues
the number of professionals who participate in reverse mentoring will increase. Time constraints prohibited leaving the survey open for more time and conducting more than five interviews. Larger numbers of participants in both parts of the study could have added further insight to the research questions.

The questions in this study regarding the “best practice” model for reverse mentoring and the evaluation process of the reverse mentoring may have led to some confusion about the way that mentoring is viewed. Some of the answers regarding reverse mentoring may have been more positive if the definition was better stated to participants. Similarly, participants had different definitions of their involvement and how they partake in mentoring/reverse mentoring. Some considered the allocation of funds to be an important part of developing diversity program and recruiting employees who are AHANA, while others were comfortable with their current traditional diversity efforts.

**Future Research**

Because this study had a small sample size, replicating it with a larger sample size could change the results. Diversity, reverse mentoring, and the importance of Millennial minorities are increasing in the Strategic Communications industry, so future researcher are more likely to obtain a larger sample than in this study. In addition to increasing the size of the sample, it may be beneficial for future studies to research the “best practice” for reverse mentoring and implementing more Millennial minorities into the field. Examining the AHANA Millennial minorities within each individual branch of Strategic Communications would be helpful in further research (e.g. non-profit, for-profit, government, international, etc.). There is also an international portion of AHANA
that focuses on the specific international difference that has not explored in-depth that would be beneficial to the Strategic Communications industry.

Reverse mentoring, in particular, deserves further exploration with another method of sampling. Reverse mentoring was not very well known to the participants in this study, but its limited importance may have been affected by the sampling method. Another avenue for future studies is changing or adding research questions about how diversity can be strengthened and speaking to more senior executives to get their options on action plans that can be implemented for Millennial monitors.

This thesis was able to provide insight and awareness to a topic that is often shadowed, due to a lack of information or a hindrance of individuals being honest. By gathering information from current Strategic Communications professionals, there is now a platform laid for further research to be continued and expanded upon. It is strongly encouraged that this topic be revisited five to ten years from now to reevaluate the survey and interview responses. As time continues hopefully the efforts toward diversifying the Strategic Communications industry with more African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian American, and Native Americans increases.
References


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doi: 10.1093/obo/9780199756841-0007


APPENDIX A: CONSENT FOR WEB SURVEY

IRB Study #TBD

By participating in this online survey, you agree to participate being conducted by a master’s student at the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University. Your participation is voluntary and you may quit at any time. All precautions have been taken so there are no risks to your participation, unless you feel uncomfortable answering questions about reverse mentorship and a few general questions about yourself. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Rashidah McCoy, at rcmccoy@mix.wvu.edu or (412) 804-1010. You may also contact the faculty advisor for the project, Dr. Steve Urbanski, at steve.urbanski@mail.wvu.edu or (304) 293-6797.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. West Virginia University’s Institutional Review Boards (IRB) has acknowledgement of this study on file. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at (304) 293-7073. If you contact the IRB, please refer to study number [TBD].

What is the purpose of this study?
The primary aim of this research is to more fully understand this growing phenomenon in the industry, without undervaluing its complexity and abundance and to move toward a more inclusive and truly committed investor approach. By gathering information on the experiences of multicultural PR professionals and noting their perceptions of diversity within the PR industry, it can be determined what steps the industry would need to take to enhance diversity within the profession.

How long will your part in this survey last?
The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

How many people will participate?
The goal for the number of participants is 200.

How will your privacy be protected?
Every effort will be made to ensure that your privacy and confidentiality will be protected. Your name and contact information will only be used to track who has or has not responded so reminders may be posted. Your name will not be used in any of the information obtained from this study or in any of the research reports. No information will be attributed to any individual participant. The Web survey program will compile results of each question electronically, and only I, Rashidah McCoy and my thesis chair, Dr. Steve Urbanski, will have access to these data. I will avoid deductive disclosure by limiting my analysis to the overall data collected by respondents.

Thank you very much for taking this questionnaire. Your input is valuable to the future of reverse mentorship. Please click on the arrow in the right-hand corner below to begin the survey.
APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. Name of your organization (optional):

2. Position you hold in your organization (optional):

3. Name (optional):

4. Type of company (Please choose all that apply):
   - Firm/Agency
   - For-profit organization or hospital
   - Nonprofit
   - Government agency/municipality
   - International
   - Other (Please Specify)

5. Number of staff members in your firm, company, or department:
   - 0-10
   - 11-25
   - 26-50
   - 51-100
   - 100-300
   - Other _________________

6. Age of organization (years)
   - 0-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 20+
   - Other _________________

7. Number of years that you have worked in Strategic Communications or a closely aligned field:
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 20+
   - Other _________________

8. Next, please answer the following descriptive questions.

9. Have you heard of "Reverse Mentoring?"
   - Yes
   - No

10. If yes, what does "Reverse Mentoring mean to you?"
11. For purposes of this research, reverse mentoring has been defined as:
Reverse mentoring involves a structured or unstructured workplace relationship between senior professionals and younger/less experienced workers. Typically, the younger workers have less expertise within the organization but more technological familiarity and skills. The pairing of senior professionals with more technologically knowledgeable workers brings about the education of those less technologically inclined (Pyle, 2005, p. 40). It may also provide a variety of other interpersonal and organizational benefits.

12. Based on the working definition of reverse mentoring, does your organization currently practice this concept?
☐ Yes
☐ No

13. If yes, please explain the reverse mentorship process and how it works.

14. Next, you will be asked to describe your reverse mentorship program.

15. Does your organization use any of the following models? Please choose all that apply.
☐ Large group
☐ Small group
☐ One-on-one
☐ Just in time ("spot" reverse mentoring)
☐ Email mentoring
☐ Phone mentoring
☐ Over lunch mentoring
☐ Other ____________________

16. For purposes of this research, both informal mentorship and formal mentorship have been defined as: Informal mentorships can be based on work or non-work issues. The mentor would select a protégé with whom they can identify with and are willing to devote their attention. In contrast, the formal, mentorships are typically not based on an initial informal relationships or interactions between organizational members. The matching process between mentor and protégé may range from random assignment to it being based on protégé files (Chao, Gardner & Walz, 1992).

17. Would you consider your reverse mentoring program to be "formal" or "informal"?

18. Do you and/or your organization consider your reverse mentoring program to be successful? Please explain briefly.

19. Do you use any type of measurement, either formal or informal, to evaluation the success of the reverse mentoring program?
☐ Yes
☐ No

20. If yes, please explain the evaluation process and how it works.

21. How would you describe a “best practice” model for implementing a mentoring/reverse-mentoring program in a mentoring/reverse mentoring program in the Strategic Communications workplace?

22. What advice do you have for others who want to succeed with reverse mentoring?

23. For purposes of this research, Millennials has been defined as:
Millennials, the cohort of Americans born between 1980 and the mid-2000s, are the largest generation in the U.S., representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013. This is the first generation to have
Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date: 42 percent identify with a race or ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic white, around twice the share of the Baby Boomer generation when they were the same age. About 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended college, whereas only 46 percent of the Baby Boomers did so (The White House, 2014).

24. Are there any Millennial minorities involved in your company or organization?
- Yes
- No

25. If so, how many Millennial minorities are there in your company or organization?
- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 20+

26. In which work task/subject area—or areas—does your organization utilize the skills of Millennials? Please choose all that apply.
- Social Media
- Web Design and development
- Innovative techniques and ideas
- Blogging/Vlogging- A vlog (or video blog) is a blog that contains video content (Merriam-Webster, 2014).
- Current technologies (iMovie, InDesign, Photoshop, etc).
- Other ____________________

27. In terms of reverse mentoring, does your company train either the mentors, mentees or both? Please choose all that apply.
- Yes, our company trains the mentors
- Yes, our company trains the mentees
- Yes, our company trains both the mentors and the mentees
- No, our company does not train the mentors
- No, our company does not train the mentees
- No, we do not train either the mentors or the mentees

28. If yes, how does the company train the individuals?

29. How do you think companies can better engage Millennial minorities entering the Strategic Communications industry? Please choose all that apply.
- Be open to learning from and adapting to Millennials
- Recruit, retain, and promote diverse staff and administrators
- Create a balanced level of transparency and openness demonstrating the "human-side" of the administration and staff
- Other ____________________

30. What do you think are the biggest benefits of having Millennial minorities within your company? Please choose all that apply.
- Millennials promote cultural diversity
- Millennials minorities have a balance of career, social life, and family
- Millennials have positive team building and community development skills
- Other ____________________
31. Next, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

32. For purposes of this research, reverse mentoring has been defined as:
*Reverse mentoring involves a structured or unstructured workplace relationship between senior professionals and younger/less experienced workers. Typically, the younger workers have less expertise within the organization but more technological familiarity and skills. The pairing of senior professionals with more technologically knowledgeable workers brings about the education of those less technologically inclined (Pyle, 2005, p. 40). It may also provide a variety of other interpersonal and organizational benefits.*

33. For purposes of this research, Millennials has been defined as:
*Millennials, the cohort of Americans born between 1980 and the mid-2000s, are the largest generation in the U.S., representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013. This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date: 42 percent identify with a race or ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic white, around twice the share of the Baby Boomer generation when they were the same age. About 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended college, whereas only 46 percent of the Baby Boomers did so (The White House, 2014).*

34. Reverse mentoring has been helpful to me.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

35. I am better able to use social media technology because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

36. I am more familiar with website design and development because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

37. I am more familiar with new innovation techniques and ideas because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
38. I am more familiar with blogging/vlogging because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial. A vlog (or video blog) is a blog that contains video content (Merriam-Webster, 2014).

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

39. I am more familiar with the current technologies (iMovie, InDesign, Photoshop, etc.) because of reverse mentoring and/or the help of a Millennial.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

40. I am more culturally diverse because of the Millennial minorities I work with.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

41. I think Millennial minorities encourage work environments that balance clearly delegated assignments with freedom and flexibility.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

42. Because of the Millennial minorities I work with, I am more encouraged to attend training and learning opportunities to enhance my skill sets.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

43. My experiences with Millennial minorities have been favorable.
44. Having a Millennial minority in my company has helped improve our company’s innovation and diverse communications.
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEW

IRB Study #1407371890

By participating in this interview, you agree to participate being conducted by a master’s student at the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University. Your participation is voluntary and you may quit at any time. All precautions have been taken so there are no risks to your participation, unless you feel uncomfortable answering questions about your involvement with reverse mentorship. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Rashidah McCoy, at rcmccoy@mix.wvu.edu or (412) 804-1010. You may also contact the faculty advisor for the project, Dr. Steve Urbanski, at Steve.Urbanski@mail.wvu.edu or (304) 293-6797.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. West Virginia University’s Institutional Review Boards (IRB) has acknowledgement of this study on file. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at (304) 293-7073. If you contact the IRB, please refer to study number 1407371890.

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Rashidah McCoy from the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about reverse mentorship with Millennial minorities and the impact they have on the strategic communications industry. I will be one of approximately fifteen people being interviewed for this research.

1. I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I will not be paid for my participation. I may decline to participate, and my decision to decline will be kept confidential.

2. I understand that I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty and that my decision to withdraw will be kept confidential.

3. I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any question that may make me feel uncomfortable in any way.

4. I understand that participation involves being interviewed by a master’s student from the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. Notes will be taken during the interview.

5. I understand that the interview will be recorded. If I do not want to be recorded, I understand that I cannot participate. I can choose to not be recorded at any time during the interview.
6. I understand that my name will be used in the resulting thesis. I understand that the full transcript of my interview will be included in the thesis as an appendix.

7. I understand that this research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

8. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

9. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

___________________________________  ____________________
My signature                                             Date

_____________________________________
My printed name
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEWER’S GUIDE

Introduction

• Interviewer introduces herself and explains the purpose of the interview (i.e. discussing the importance of Millennial minorities in the Strategic Communications industry and what the research hopes to accomplish).
  
  o This research focuses on the hiring, training, and mentorship of Millennial minorities in the Strategic Communications industry, with an emphasis of reverse mentoring. Cultural diversity in the workplace focuses on a beneficially changing environmental, that improves problem-solving and decision-making, access to a new consumer market, enhances product development, and/or the ability to compete in a global market.
  
  o The main purpose of this study is to reinforce diversity in the workforce in order to accomplish the goals or the outreach that corporations have set for themselves. By gathering information on the experiences of multicultural Strategic Communications professionals and noting their perceptions of diversity within the Strategic Communications industry, it can be determined what steps the industry would need to take to enhance diversity within the profession.
  
  o This research is focused specifically on cultural diversity with African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans.

• Interviewer explains that the interview will be recorded but kept confidential, and that it will be used only for this study.

• Participant completes information/consent form.

Background Questions

• Participant states his/her name and spells it for recording purposes

• What company do you work for and what type of company is it? (I.e. PR Firm/Agency, For-profit company or hospital, Nonprofit, or Government agency/municipality)

• What position do you hold in your company?

Diversity Questions

• What does diversity mean to you and your company?

• What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how do you develop and apply your commitment at this company?

• Has diversity played a role in shaping your career and job/client relationships? If yes, how so?

Impact of Diversity Questions

• What efforts have you and/or your company made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?
• How can organizational leadership and HR take a more active role in diversity within your organization?

**Challenge of Diversity Question**

• What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment? What steps/strategies have you taken to meet this challenge? How successful were those steps/strategies?

**Final Questions**

• Do you have final thoughts to share about any of the topics discussed today?

• Interviewer will thank the participant for his or her participation and emphasize the importance of the interview.
APPENDIX E: SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS

Sample Facebook and LinkedIn Post

*Facebook/LinkedIn Sample 1:* Hey everyone! I’m doing a survey for my master’s thesis about the mentorship of Millennial minorities, so if you have any experience with mentoring, reverse mentorship, or insight on how diversity could improve the PR industry, please take my survey. And if you wouldn’t mind, please share this post or send the survey link to other PR pros you know. Thank you so much for participating. [link]

*Facebook/LinkedIn Sample 2:* My master’s research is coming along well, but I’m still looking for more participants in my survey about the mentorship of Millennial minorities, so if you’ve ever been a mentor in the PR field or have insight on how diversity could improve the PR industry and haven’t taken it yet, please do so. I’d also be most appreciative if you would share this post or send the survey link to other PR pros you know. Thanks for taking the time to participate. [link]

*Facebook/LinkedIn Sample 3:* My thesis research is coming to a close, but there is still time for anyone who has experience with mentoring, reverse mentorship, or has insight on how diversity could improve the PR industry to take this survey about the mentorship of Millennial minorities. And it’s not too late to share this post or send the survey link to other PR pros you know. Thanks again for making this study a success. [link]

Sample Twitter Posts

*Twitter Sample 1:* PR Pros: take and share this survey for my master’s research on the mentorship of Millennial minorities. Thanks so much! [link]

*Twitter Sample 2:* Help a PRSSA member and future PR Pro with my masters research survey. And tell your friends to take it too. Thanks! [link]

*Twitter Sample 3:* How do you include mentorship in your company? Tell me in this survey for my masters research. And share it too. Thanks! [link]

*Twitter Sample 4:* Master’s research is going well, but I could use more PR Pros to take this survey and spread it around. Thanks! [link]

*Twitter Sample 5:* Master’s research is winding down, but you can still take my survey about the mentorship of Millennial minorities. Thank you for your help! [link]
Sample Strategic Communications Professional Email

Hi [PR Professional’s name],

Thank you for reading my email and letting me know about your involvement in [mentoring, reverse mentorship, or Millennial (minority) hiring]. It sounds like great work!

I'm a graduate student in the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University doing my master's thesis about the hiring, training, and mentoring of Millennial minorities. Part of my study is conducting an online survey. The goal of my research is to gather information on the experiences of multicultural public relations professionals, noting their perceptions of diversity within the public relations industry. Through this research, professionals will be able determine what steps the industry will need to take to enhance diversity within the profession.

The survey will take 10 to 15 minutes. It is completely voluntary and you are not required to answer every question. Your name will not be attached to your response. More information is explained at the beginning of the survey.

Would you take the survey at the link below and share it with other public relations professionals? Also, please contact me if you would like to partake in the interview portion of the research as well. Thank you very much for helping me.

http://wvu.qualtrics...1G2Lh7eWaAJSt4V

Sincerely,

Rashidah McCoy
Graduate Assistant
Reed College of Media
West Virginia University
Sample LinkedIn Forum Post

Hi everyone,

I'm a graduate student in the Reed College of Media at West Virginia University doing my master's thesis about the hiring, training, and mentoring of Millennial minorities. Part of my study is conducting an online survey. The goal of my research is to gather information on the experiences of multicultural public relations professionals, noting their perceptions of diversity within the public relations industry. Through this research, professionals will be able determine what steps the industry will need to take to enhance diversity within the profession.

The survey will take 10 to 15 minutes. It is completely voluntary and you are not required to answer every question. Your name will not be attached to your response. More information is explained at the beginning of the survey.

Would you take the survey at the link below and share it with other public relations professionals? Also, please contact me if you would like to partake in the interview portion of the research as well. Thank you very much for helping me.

http://wvu.qualtrics...1G2Lh7eWaAJSt4V
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

In all transcripts, the investigator’s words are in bold, and the participants’ words are not.

Interview #1

What company do you work for and what type of company is it? (I.e. PR Firm/Agency, For-profit company or hospital, Nonprofit, or Government agency/municipality)

360 degrees, a public relations agency, for profit

What position do you hold in your company?

CEO, founder

What does diversity mean to you and your company?

Diversity means different ethnic backgrounds, various cultural beliefs.

What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how do you develop and apply your commitment at this company?

Diversity is at the heart of American business. As a small business owner, I hire employees and interns from a wide-ranging population in my community and these are individuals from different ethnic groups. I really do try and “hire” various people from other races, other than Caucasian. I believe that when different people with different backgrounds come together, it culminates in interesting conversations.

Has diversity played a role in shaping your career and job/client relationships? If yes, how so?

No, it has not.

What efforts have you and/or your company made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?

I have posted job listings on African American sites and colleges.

How can organizational leadership and HR take a more active role in diversity within your organization?

This does not apply.

What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment?
What steps/strategies have you taken to meet this challenge? How successful were those steps/strategies?

A diverse working environment naturally means that there will be different opinions – as a result of different upbringings and culture. The challenge is that there needs to be a respect of others’ opinions. What steps/strategies have you taken to meet this challenge? How successful were those steps/strategies? I have an open mind and this has proved very successful. As a business owner, it is professional to allow others' opinions and to hear their perspective.

Do you have final thoughts to share about any of the topics discussed? There are many large companies that are embracing diversity in the workplace, such as AT&T.

Thanks a lot for doing this interview and for taking the survey too. Your time and insight are greatly appreciated!
Interview #2

What company do you work for and what type of company is it? (I.e. PR Firm/Agency, For-profit company or hospital, Nonprofit, or Government agency/municipality)

I am currently employed full-time by the University of Oregon, a state institution.

What position do you hold in your company?

I am a tenure-track assistant professor of public relations.

What does diversity mean to you and your company?

As an institution of higher education and even more so as a public university, supporting and affirming diversity is imperative for us. And by diversity, I mean not only the diversity of personal characteristics and backgrounds, but certainly diversity of thought and opinion, as well.

What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how do you develop and apply your commitment at this company?

All I can speak for is myself; I cannot speak for others. For me, being committed to diversity means checking my biases and assumptions at the door. I truly try to put myself in another person's shoes, no matter what the situation, interaction or conversation.

Has diversity played a role in shaping your career and job/client relationships? If yes, how so?

How could diversity not play a role? We live in a world rich with diversity.

What efforts have you and/or your company made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?

Again, I work for a public university; it is our job to promote and support diversity of thought and experience. Everything we do is to work toward that aim.

How can organizational leadership and HR take a more active role in diversity within your organization?

Faculties are relatively self-governed, at least in day-to-day matters. Internal politics are always an issue, and reflect themselves, at times, based on tenure, age, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc. It would certainly help to have an ambassador from HR and/or administration provide objective counsel on how certain decisions are made, how faculty-wide meetings are conducted, how candidates are recruited/hired/on boarded,
how funds are allocated, etc.

**What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment?**
**What steps/strategies have you taken to meet this challenge? How successful were those steps/strategies?**

Every work environment is diverse; whenever you gather two or more people together, you're going to have diversity. It's imperative to have clearly defined goals, to set a tone of mutual respect and understanding, and to have zero tolerance for disrespectful, harassing and/or abusive behavior, any of which can come in the form of passive-aggressiveness. It takes real emotional intelligence as a leader to ferret out what is happening between individuals in a work team.

**Do you have final thoughts to share about any of the topics discussed?**

It is difficult to provide meaningful answers to such broad, open-ended questions. You have not clearly defined what you mean by "diversity" nor provided any clear examples. Perhaps that was intentional? Regardless, I found this interview difficult to complete.

**Thanks a lot for doing this interview and for taking the survey too. Your time and insight are greatly appreciated!**
Interview #3

What company do you currently work for and what type of company is it?
I work at Global Media Outreach and it’s a nonprofit organization.

What position do you hold in your company?
I’m a Marketing Associate.

Thank you for participating it’s greatly appreciated!

What does diversity mean to you and your company?

Ok well to me diversity means not just people who look different. You know a lot of times I hear people mention diversity they think of we have different races we’re diverse. To me diversity is not people who look different, but people who come from different social economic backgrounds, people who grew up in different cultures and places, because with that you gain a different worldview. If everyone grew up in the same kind of place you don’t really get all the nuances of all the cultural groups and cultural experiences in life. To me that’s what diversity is. To my company diversity is people who look different, people who come from different countries, and people who speak different languages. We have this emphasis at our company on translating and talking to people from all over the world, so for us culture is the behaviors, the languages, and all the different nuances you need to know I order to communicate with folks who are in various countries around the world.

Ok great thank you that was a beautiful answer!

Yea, no problem.

So our next question is what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how do you develop and apply your commitment at this company? You can answer that in reference to yourself specifically, your department, or your company in general whatever fits you best.

Ok, so what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity? To me having a commitment to diversity means that in everything you do you’re constantly thinking about it. I’m a writer so I write copy for different things, so when I write I think about who’s receiving this message and how can I make sure this message is appropriate, not just for one type of audience, but for multiple audiences. You know, how can I make sure that imagery or a particular marketing piece appeals to more than one type of person. So to me, this ongoing commitment to diversity means that I’m not just featuring just one kind of person all the time or speaking to one kind of person, but that I make sure that the message can be well received to a broad group, to a lot of different people.

Ok great that’s understood, I appreciate that as a write myself I’m learning to write and communicate to a broad range of people. It’s all a learning process.

It really is.
The next question I have is, has diversity played a role in shaping your career and job/client relationships? If yes, how so?

Ok well I would say yes it has definitely played a role in my career and my relationships with different clients. I can remember right out of college my very first post grad internship/fellowship was a diversity fellowship and I was working at the Union of Concerned Scientist in D.C. and they do a lot of environmental work and there aren't a ton of minority voice in that particular rim, so it was excited to see how they wanted to pull in people who might be effected by environment injustice so that we could start working in that field so that we could start going out and working in our own communities to let them know what the issues might be. So I think that in my career I’ve seen how different industries are really looking for diverse voices that can communicate better or advocate better for different groups. So I think a lot about cross-cultural communications, because I see that a lot of companies want a strategic campaign or something like that and they realize we have to talk to different audiences and we have to talk to this particular group. But they’re not quite sure how to do that. I can see how diversity plays a role in the knowledge I have that to be in kind of inherit, because I am a minority that it will help the company come up with messaging and other things that really will resonate with the audience.

Thank you that was very deep and I’m still learning that aspect of diversity. Your next question is more focused on the impact of diversity, so what efforts have you and/or your company made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?

At my company I say we have a pretty diverse group there and they are concerned with making sure we understand different groups from different places. We have a global focus, so our audience isn’t just America we have clients from various countries. Even if you translate something it doesn’t mean it translates culturally, it just means you translated the words. There might be a different way that you might want to present that information. So we’re constantly making sure the communications we’re sending out to different people in different parts if the world, are not just translated verbatim from the English language, because that doesn’t translate the culture. We make sure that we’re constantly looking at things, analyzing them, and saying ok we have to change this or learn a little bit more about what people want/are like in this region. We’re constantly studying that and pulling from people who have grown up in different countries, because they know first hand, it’s really beneficial and great.

Wow that’s great! How can organizational leadership and HR take a more active role in diversity within your organization?

You know, I think HR plays a huge role in the diversity of an organization. I think that a lot of times what we hear about, just as professionals, we hear about the way you can get your foot in the door through your network. But I kind of challenge that a little bit because sometimes I see that there might be one person from one university at a
company and if that university wasn’t diverse and if they continue to recommend people from their network and university who all look like them and came from places that they did. I think it all turns out that the office won’t be that diverse. If HR makes it a point to go into new markets, go visit different universities and not just the ones their employees already came from you’ll actually find new pools of talent and cultural knowledge you might not have on your team yet. I think HR can definitely play a role in that way.

I agree with that completely, thank you. Your last question is a three-part question; the first part is what do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment? The second one is what steps/strategies have you taken to meet this challenge and also how successful were those steps/strategies?

I think the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment is initially getting everyone in sync. I think different people from life, or whatever it might be, they just might not understand one another. Initially it’s a learning process of understanding why does someone feel this way or why does someone communicate in this way, and understanding where that come from so that your able to communicate with them and be productive with them everyday.

Ok, so what strategies do you or your company use to meet these challenges?

Well I think, me personally I talk to someone and we can be discussing anything, the news or anything like that because a part of my worldview and where I come from affects how I feel. It’s really interesting that we can share with one another. What is it that makes us feel that way or what has been our viewpoint on things and what we’ve seen in life? You have the ability to learn something new about someone and it helps you to understand who they are, and how/why other people may feel that way. So I think it’s a matter of that comradery of getting to know people on the job you’re able to share from you’re personal experiences and it helps other personalizes how different groups might view things.

Ok thank you and do you feel that these steps you taken have been successful in the relationship you’ve built whether it with cliental, colleagues, or other individuals?

Well I would say so, you know most times what I find is people don’t know about different groups or people from different walks of life it’s because they are ignorant to it and just don’t know, and I totally understand that. You can’t talk about what you don’t know, so whenever someone actually shades new light for you or illustrates something for you, it actually helps them become more well rounded and a light bulb comes on, it’s like “wow I never knew that or I never would have thought that would be offensive”. I think it does work, definitely.

Agreed I feel the same way. Are there any final thoughts you have on any of the topics discussed today?

I don’t think I do.
That’s fine you gave some very in-depth and knowledgeable insight about how you fell about diversity, not only within your company, but how you feel about it yourself. I truly appreciate that Tara!

Aaawww thanks!

Thanks a lot for helping me out and I’m so excited that you were apart it!

You’re very welcomed no problem!
Interview #4

What company do you currently work for and what type of company is it?

Widmeyer Communications, Finn Partners Company

What position do you hold in your company?

Managing Partner

Thank you for participating it’s greatly appreciated!

What does diversity mean to you and your company?

I think diversity means a number of different things. It means that we’re bringing a diverse set of perspectives to our client changes. Diverse can be measured on a number of scales, of course there’s the diversity that comes with the racial ethnic backgrounds, but there’s also diversity in age, diversity socio economic status, and diversity in nationalities. So, when we are looking at our relative success I trying to create a diverse work force we look at all of those factors.

Understood, thank you. So our next question leads into that areas, so what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how do you develop and apply your commitment at this company?

It means more than just saying it would be good to be diverse. It actually means that we go to an extra effort to identify diverse candidates, and that’s a big distinction. A lot of folks are just like, ok we’ll post the job description in the same place we always did and hopefully we get diverse candidates, but if we don’t and we end up hiring the one that looks the rest of the people who already work here, we’ll that’s because nobody else applied. That’s not how we approach it. We approach it by saying; look if we keep doing it the same way we’ve always done it we’ll keep getting the same kinds of candidates. So we need to change the way we reach out, the way we recruit, and the way we identify. So that means we go to different colleges than we used to go to, to recruit junior staff, it means we advertise, we place our job descriptions in different publications online and offline in order to recruit staff. We network to find diverse groups of friends and colleagues, as we can know that passing along the word is the best way to find diverse candidates. When you find someone who is tapped into a market you’ve never been able to reach before, if you find a couple folks and say please pass along this job opportunity you can get some really high quality candidates.

Very true very true, thank you for that. So, has diversity played a role in shaping your career and job/client relationships? If yes, how so?

I guess I can look at this two ways; I’m a gay man so I sort of represent, even though
I’m White and a male, and I am LGBT. So I brought diversity to the workforce myself so I recognize the value of a diverse workforce. When I got into a position of management I knew that I would have to add or that I would need to focus even more on trying harder to create a diverse workforce, especially around the area of racial diversity. We have invested a lot of time and effort, we have a client that makes its very clear to us that the racial diversity of our workforce is a factor in whether or not they will hire and retain us as their consultant. They have made that perfectly clear. So I absolutely have experiences dealing with cliental that care very much about racial diversity.

Interesting.

And in turn, it has meant that we were already very very committed to racial diverse we have had to step that up even more. Washington, D.C. and public relations is notorious for having a very White workforce and it seems like when a high caliber candidate is from a community of color comes along, everyone wants him or her because there such a thirst for more high quality candidates from communities of color.

That’s great and very insightful. I love that your client is pushing that and that your company has continues to move forward with that push for diversity.

We actually have to fill out a form every year that does a census of how many members of racial minorities or communities of color we have at senior levels in the firm, mid levels, and at administrative levels.

That leads us perfectly into the next question discuss the efforts the company has made to foster the diversity competence and understanding of diversity, not only in our industry, but also in the lives that we live. How can organizational leadership and HR take a more active role in diversity within your organization?

It really comes down to folks look to senior levels to for guide about if something is a priority and if we’re never talking about it, then staff get the message that it’s only important when someone else brings it up. So we talk about it a lot. We actually won a distinction in diversity award in 2013 from PR News.

I saw that, congratulations on that award!
Does HR do any types of training with the individuals who are coming from different rims, different schools, or backgrounds for the individuals who are already in the company?

You know this is where I wish the story were different, we on the account side, staff and managers, have had to push HR to work harder at recruiting more diverse candidates. So it’s been almost backwards, if you thought the HR folks were the most committed to recruiting a diverse workforce that’s not been our experience. We’ve actually had to really push hard to say, “No all the resumes I’m seeing do not represent a diverse slate of candidates”
Wow interesting. So, you’ve already mentioned the challenge your company faces with HR, but how are you working to push these steps/strategies to meet this challenge?

We recruit from different colleges, advertise through different outlets, and we use Word of Mouth networking with new and different people who represent the communities we’re trying to do a better job of recruiting from.

You kind of touched on the success of the efforts as well. So thank you and I appreciate you taking the time to have this conversation with me today.

Well good, it was nice to talk to you Rashidah and I appreciate helping you out.

Thanks a lot for helping me out and I’m so excited that you were apart it!

Interview #5

What company do you currently work for and what type of company is it?

I was formally, as of last week, an employee at Fleishman Hillard, international communications in the D.C. office, but I have recently taken the position a position as the Marketing Communications Director for a company in D.C.

Congratulations on your new position!

Thank you very much! But I am an Alfred Fleishman Diversity Fellow.

So our first question is, what does diversity mean to you and your company? You can answer that which ever way suits you.

Well, to me diversity is definitely a concept that is always evolving and always changing. It should definitely focus on people’s differences and background, in terms of ethic diversity, race, religion, or any type of identity that intersects with one another. I feel that these aspects should be incorporated in anyone’s definition of diverse. In my personal and professional life diversity has more so had more of a cultural and racial undertone, because of my personal passions and previous experiences. In terms of the industry and Fleishman in particular, I think diversity is being viewed from the leans of business standpoint, more diverse account executives, administrators, managers, equals more diverse cliental, which also means were able to better serve more diverse clients and help them reach goals in terms of their abilities. I think that’s the concept and idea behind it, but in terms of the execution I think the definition, the goal, and the steps being made toward achieving those are not really connected at this point. I say that because diverse is something that within communications is just now getting a lot of main stream attention and its something that people are now really understanding that if we want to be successful and competitive, we have to diversify our teams. We have to
really make it something that we care about from the top down and not just from different pockets of the industry, collaboratively its something that we really need to work on. And I really think that some people are a little bit more ahead of the game in terms of certain agencies and certain professionals, but it’s really something that’s being talked about and the action behind it is still very very elementary, in terms of the kind of people being brought into deal with it and in terms of the steps that we’re actually wiling to make. If that makes any sense.

Yes it does completely, thank you.

Ok, next question is what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how do you develop and apply your commitment at this company?

I think having a commitment to diversity means that you have not only identified it as a need and as a goals but you have brought in more than just your senior leadership management to address it, but you’re bringing in people from outside our your office or outside of the industry to help you a better holistic idea of what diversity means for you and how you can accomplish those goals. It means a serious discussion of the allocation of resources, because in terms of this industry and in all industries if your going to make diversity a company wide initiative there has to be time and allocation of serious funds and a real commitment to viewing it as something of real importance. It can’t be something you’re just going to do for a season or a quarterly goal, but a continuous commitment for the company from moving forward. I think this happens with a lot of people, they get a lot of steam behind them or read something on PRSA or PR News Wire and it’s like oh well this company is doing this, we can do that too, then you get but so far with the planning. Then it comes time to put the money down you have to actually talk about hiring full time people or a serious amount of training is needed, then we try to find other less expensive ways to compensate; than within the next year or so its not even a discussion.

I’ve never seen it that way before, thank you. That thought process of the funding and idea that after much discussion a topic of so much relevance becomes no longer important. Knowing people don’t want to put that commitment into…

Absolutely! And working at Fleishman it was a tremendous experience because of being in as a Diversity Fellow and working with headquarters in St. Louis on diversity initiatives, but actually now I’m kind of glad it happening that I’m not employed by Fleishman. I’m still a Fellow, once a Fellow always a Fellow, so I still so have a commitment to the program and responsibilities, but there is a misconception about the way diversity is viewed in the industry. Some of them are good in term of there’s no people of color in the industry, that’s not true. But the channels and the ways people of color get into the industry, some of that is a little bit hazy in terms of what’s really going on. In term of how some of these companies really feel about diversity, some of that is true, some are passionate and what it to happen, but the executive it where things fall short. The idea that it’s more than just a notion on a piece of paper, that it’s something that actually has to be put into action and worked on consistently just like client work.
You have to continuously reevaluate, continuously find areas where work is needed, or find your weaknesses to continuously work to fill those holes and strengthen those areas. Some times that’s just not what happens.

That’s such a scary thought to me.

Ok the next question is, has diversity played a role in shaping your career and job/client relationships? If yes, how so?

Before I worked at Fleishman I was in graduate school and before graduate school I worked full-time as a reporter. In my academic career and as an undergraduate diversity has been driven the majority of my decisions in life just as being an advocate for social justice and racial equality. As a professional and as a reporter who covered diverse communities and under represented communities in West Virginia, to my selection of graduate school, the to my selection of my fellowship at Fleishman diversity has played a role in all of my decisions thus far. In my professional role at Fleishman, which was my first agency job out of school, diversity did play a part in that because I was selected because I’m a diverse individual in the industry. I had expectations of the fellowship in terms of what I would be able to do or how my voice would be heard in terms of discussing some of the issue we just glazed over. I was able to do some of that and some of it I wasn’t, in terms of being able to use my background to affect the client I had, was able to do that a little. As someone who was sought out to help the firm establish more relationships with people of color, different organization in the community, and bring in different clients there were talks about that, it was all something I would have maybe gotten to do, but I didn’t not get to do during the fellowship; which was slightly disappointing. That was supposed to be apart of it, but diversity has definitely played a part in my professional life from its infancy to now and it will continue.

Thank you very much for that insight, your next question is more focused on the impact of diversity, so what efforts have you and/or your company made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?

In terms of Fleishman, I think one of the things they did was establish the fellowship. It’s very new, Fleishman established the Diversity Fellowship in 2011, so there has only been four classes thus far. It started out in only a few offices, but now it does suppose to be in all of the domestic offices in the U.S. So, I think that was kind of their first and biggest push. The founder of our firm were actually applicants of diversity way back in the day in terms of fighting for equal pay for people in St. Louis. Our firm has kind of been rapped up in certain elements of diversity for a very long time in all candors. People from outside of minority communities have a very different idea of what diversity is. So for them back then, the concept of even wanting to work with underrepresented populations is a big deal and I think that’s kind of driven Fleishman in moving forward. Their fellowship was the first commitment to bringing in ethically diverse and minority candidates, which started in the D.C. office, were I was at, and then it became a national initiative. Out of that has come more conversation it really hasn’t been many other actions put forward by Fleishman and Fleishman is the only major agency that has that type of fellowship. It’s a full-time professional fellowship, a lot of
other companies have internships, and I don’t know if they call them diversity internships, but they focus on bringing in minority students. Those are cyclical, every three-month or however, they’re in and their out, but the fellowship (Fleishman) intends to retain their minority candidates that’s something they’re still trying to build up on. In my mind and my knowledge that’s their main push, but of course trying to bring in more diverse clients is something they’re always trying to do, but you lose you’re marketability to reach diverse audiences if you don’t have diverse people to work for you. Its kind of like, we want you but we don’t have he ability to meet your needs. So what we do a lot of times is we’ll handle a certain part of an account, but if it has anything to do with a minority community we can do the strategy, but when it come down to the audience outreach we have to out source it because we can’t do it. So I think a lot of firms are battling with the same thing, that they have the ideas and know what they need to do, but it’s really about the money and the at management is prioritizing their goals and needs for the firm.

Wow, thank you that was really in-depth and insightful I appreciate it. So our next question is, how can organizational leadership and HR take a more active role in diversity within your organization? You kind f spoke about how there’s a lacking within the abilities to reach minorities communities, but not the outreach aspect. So how can HR help better situation such as that one?

I think the first step from an HR talent development standpoint is making it a priority that when applying their strategies to applicants, whether they be for admin. or senior administration diverse candidates are always in the pool. For them that may mean casting a border net, which means more money, maybe including other universities in your search, or take trips to other parts of the country that you don’t unusually pull candidates from. It’s about the allocation of resources! I get really agitated when interns come in every year or every cycle and none of them are of color. That to me sends that message that you’re saying that there are not candidates of color, these are the best candidates that we could find and that’s why they’re here. That’s not that case! The same thing with hiring, if every manager you bring in, if every senior VP you bring in is not a person from an underrepresented community, besides the LGBT community, which does have a very strong presents in the communications industry. That’s cool, but that’s causes a whole different dichotomy issue, we come to a point where talking about diversity were we are diverse, we have such and many Latinos and this many women, we’re talking about ethic diversity. Even to a certain extent religious diverse, there are no Muslims. In this industry really, they are very much underrepresented. There aren’t a lot of Buddhist or Asian Americans that work on the account side, most of them get out in digit or the creative/design side. For me, it starts with open and honest conversations with leadership and at Fleishman we were really blessed to have an amazing CEO who will flat-out say, “There are enough colored folks, Black and brown people in here.” In meeting with us and having conversations with him he not stupid and is very aware that there’s an issue, but ad the CEO of a company all the issues in the industry are his issues. We need people under nether you who are able to say this is something we need to make a priority now. It shouldn’t matter how much money it cost. In terms of larger agencies we need to make this a priority and that’s on talent develop, because most
diversity inclusion programs are within HR talent and develop. Unless you’re blessed to have someone in an office that has that experience and can take that role, all of that is coming from the top down. So if you don’t have leadership in HR talent development who have identified this and can say we need to recruit more diverse candidates, than you can have all of the conversations and all of the flowerily lovely talk about how wonder our backgrounds are and how everyone’s differences matter, but there’s no diverse people all of that goes out the window. And so do your clients who need diverse representation at the end of the day. It really has to be a commitment from HR and leadership. We have 88 offices globally, and they (HR) are responsible for staffing all of these offices with the staff that they need and that’s not easy, but my whole thing is stop making excuses. You spend millions upon millions of dollars hiring annually, make one or two of those people per year from a diverse background! Stop with the nonsense! As people of color I know there are qualified candidates from all walks of life, they don’t all have to be White women and gay White men that get brought into these positions. When we start really pulling punches and start having those types of serious conversations with action put behind them, then we’ll start to see more changes.

I agree completely! I come from an HBCU and I’ve never heard of the Fleishman Hillard Diversity Fellowship before coming to WVU, do you think they reach out to HBCU’s?

They reach out to the ones that they want. That’s very true, especially in D.C., because I went to American for graduate school, the only reason I heard about it was because I had a professor who was a former SVP there and she was like “You’re it! You’re what they want.” So I sought it out. They do fairs a Howard University and do some recruiting at HBCU’s, but the people who are doing these recruiting’s are White. So, in their search of HBCU’s, from my personal experience they go to the top ones that pop out- Howard, Hampton, FAMU, in terms of the communications industry. Then if they find out candidates a lot of times it’s through referral, because as Fellows it’s our jobs to provide referrals and come back to help with the recruitment. Starting in March we’ll be traveling to speak to students and so on.

That really makes a difference hearing from Fellows and their first-and experiences.

It honestly does help students, but from the HR standpoint they’re casting a net and what they get is what they get. To their credit, one of the big things that happened at our orientation in St. Louis, where we all get together and have the opportunity to hash out the issues, talk about what’s good, and some of our advice to better the program moving forward was to cast a bigger net. There are some many good communications and journalism schools that just don’t have the funds to send students to these conferences where they recruit. Some students may not have the money to go to Color Comm. or PRSSA, so they miss those opportunities, there needs to be more of a push to get these recruiters to go out to these schools where there’s qualified candidates, but maybe no resources to send them. When we bring in interns a big problem in the industry is you have internship coordinators who are junior level. Very few firms have internship
coordinators who are maybe a senior account executive. So these are young people bringing in students from schools that they identify with and who are bringing in students who they identify with personally. At Fleishman every intern that came into the program while I was there, I was there for three cycles of interns, none of them were of color, three of them were male (we bring in six each cycle), and they were all from predominately White institutions that are usually for students who are more economically stable. So we had a lot from Georgetown University, George Washington University, Brigham Young University, Utah University, and New York University. All of these schools it cost a lot of money to go there! Some of these students are being selected and are able to come and stay as opposed to actually taking full-time positions, because interns don’t make a lot of money. We also lose out of grabbing people of color also because if what we’re offering them. Some of these kids come from money, so coming to Fleishman, Edelman, Ketchum, or Burston and making $10 an hour for six months isn’t nothing for them, because their not worried about the money their worries about the name on the resume, as oppose to possibly having pockets of really talented students who would want to come in and be there for the work, mentorship, and learning. But the can’t offered to make $10 an hour, so we don’t consider them. The fellowship is the same thing, even though it’s situated for older students like right out of grad school or college seniors. The internships are also really string breeding rounds for diverse talent. If you can get an intern and retain them that’s a huge asset to the company, but they’re automatically assuming who can do what, who can afford what based on demographic, based on region where they come from, who they like, looks likes them, who they can go to lunch with, and who they can discuss handbags and all that. This is real inside stuff! That is of course meeting the criteria that they have to meet and never doing anything overtly discriminatory, but everyone has unconscious bias. So until stuff like that gets pulled out on the table there’s always going to be this issue of diversity in this industry particularly, because it is extremely hard to break in. A lot of it is whom you know, so if you’re being pulled in because you know somebody, then you get established and you’re pulling someone in because you somebody, students of color don’t have the opportunity, because there’s nobody there that they identify with or has sought them out as somebody who would be qualified. The person who brought me in was White, but she saw things from a different perspective while she was at Fleishman and she helped me position myself to get it. The fellowship is the only entry point for us like that.

I’ve the same exact things when it comes to entering the industry. It’s not what you know it’s whom you know. That’s definitely one of the key hindrances for us as individuals as color and a key area of my research.

Sometimes the person doesn’t have the professional understanding diversity as something necessary for the business. I’ve worked on a team when I was in public affairs and no one was of color. We had one senior account executive that was from Turkey and they viewed her as ethically diverse. In terms of our domestic definition of diverse, she’s not considered diverse. She viewed herself as White, which said a lot. We have these discussions about interns coming in and they (senior executives/HR) say, “it’s really about the work and the competency that you have, ethic diversity doesn’t
matter if you’re Black or if you’re White. If you can come in and do the work…” Well why is there no one of color in here working! If it doesn’t matter than why is everyone in here White, besides my friend Zi who’s a China Fellow?

And I take it no one was able to answer your question?

No because that would us down another path of discussion. When you have people of color in leadership positions we’re the ones who are able to kick down doors to make progress, because to have gotten there you have to have a certain professional demeanor, strength, and courage. So, we have a tendency to make good leaders because of what it takes for us to get there in the first place. It’s simple, hire more Black people, hire more Latino people, and hire more Asian people. The make them want to stay. That’s the second part, they’ll hire people of color but there’s nothing established that supports diverse professionals in the workplace and they leave. There’s no support system or any kind of training around cultural consciousness. You can’t just grab a bunch of people from diverse backgrounds and throw them into a homogenous environment, and say, “Work”, which everyone else around them is business as usual. You have to invest in training your current staff on how to work with diverse candidates. It’s something that should be done together, but nine times out of ten people of color are used to being the minority, so they already know how to work with y’all. You need to learn how to be in a workplace where you can respect us not just as other professionals, but the difference of opinion. People communicate differently and as communicators you would think would know that, but they don’t. In this industry time is more important than money. People don’t want to spend an hour going to diversity training with “Rashidah” who works in publishing. But at the end of the day that may be what keeps “Rashidah” here. You have to identify that someone is coming in from a different entry point and with different experiences. You have to identify the institutional systems of oppression and inequality that shape everything in this country, not just business, but everything. That has to be called out because it all affects the way we do business and all industries, but that’s where it gets dicey. When you start talking about White privilege and how it affects our ability to reach our clients, then people shut down.

Those are the situations I have concern about when it comes to me entering the industry, how will I be viewed, will my voice be heard, and will they respect my skills as a young professional. Even when it comes to others taking in my different viewpoints because of where I’m from and what I have experienced,

Absolutely I understand completely, but your research is right on point. What keeps those of us who are able to stay is mentorship, have a mentor. I only had one and she was touch and go as well at points, but having her was what gave me the resolve to stay as long as I did. The fellowship is a year I stayed seven and a half months.

She was within the company?

Yes, she’s a senior vice president and partner at Fleishman D.C. I didn’t have a mentor within my public affairs team, I had the other Fellow who was Muslim, and she was
awesome. She was Egyptian, but didn’t identify as a person of color. We were Fellows together and she did identify with some of the stuff, but as a Black woman I had one mentor, one confident that I could go to for support and encouragement, which was Patricia. Finding that one person who advocates for you is what keeps us there, even if it’s somebody on a completely different team than your one. Finding somebody who you feel identifies with you that will listen to you, support you, and will advocate for you. I know that’s what the fellowship at Fleishman is suppose to do, along with some of the other agencies, even if they don’t have fellowship programs they have mentorship programs for diverse populations. Its helpful for people who come into the firm at entry or mid- level, they’ll pair them with somebody in the company or they find them a mentor. They’re identifying that we’re losing people because there’s no system of support, which makes a huge difference.

Thank you so much for giving your input, experiences, passion, and insight today. You were truly amazing! Do you have any final thoughts you want to add?

No, thank you for allowing me to share and be apart of your research it was a pleasure.
APPENDIX G: QUALITATIVE ANSWERS TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Do you and/or your organization considered your reverse mentoring program to be successful? Please explain briefly.

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| Confidence           | The reverse mentoring provided the mentor, mentee, or both the confidence to accomplish a task, enhance their skills, and create relationships, or feel/act more efficient. | • Has brought a sense of confidence to new/young employees by not feeling they are alone in their career/tasks.  
• Yes, numerous mentees have advanced to career positions in sports marketing and sports broadcasting  
• Yes. The reverse mentoring has given some of our employees more confidence in their skills, helped to create relationships and made us more efficient as a whole. |
| Informal Feedback    | The reverse mentorship program has no formal layout or design for those involved. Those who engage with one another may not have been paired together and may meet spontaneously. There may also be no formal evaluation process for the program or meetings. | • I would say it is anecdotally, but as it's not a formal program, but one that occurs organically/spontaneously, it has not been formally evaluated. However, when people learn new things--regardless of who does the teaching/mentoring--it's a plus for the organization  
• Yes. Successful in that the informal feedback helps improve our department, and gives each of us some important additional feedback to help us improve our understanding of the younger generation and of our own strengths/weaknesses in helping reach and influence that generation |
| Mentor/Mentee/Peer   | The mentor and mentee are able to grow, learn, and transfer skills between each other. Their                                           | • Yes, faculty and students learn and grow together  
• Yes, we learn from many of our                                           |
| Growth Together | Growth Together bond allows a positive impact on their progression as professionals. | peers.  
- Yes. The company has benefitted from reaching out to young/new employees for new/fresh information/outlook  
- Yes. There is a transference of skills that makes the senior staff better  
- Yes. We provide individuals (both mentee and mentor) opportunities to learn from one another and it has had a positive impact on our culture and made us an employer of choice. |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Need-Based | The mentor and mentee interact with one another when they need to do so, whether it is to update each other on their career progression, learn a new skill, or conduct a mock interview. | - From my personal experience the reverse mentoring takes place is more need-based than anything else  
- Yes- but it's not an official program – just done as needed |
• How would you describe a “best practice” model for implementing a mentoring/reverse mentoring program in the Strategic Communications workplace?

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| Benefits Both Parties Involved | The mentor and mentee each have a devolved interest and accountability in the success of the outcome. Both parties involved will learn and grown from each other. | • A professional relationship that both parties have a vested interest and accountability in the success of the outcome.  
• One that provides benefit/value to both parties  
• One that resulted in both parties learning from each other. |
| Establish a Curriculum, Assignments, and Prescribed Interactions | Develop topics to discuss during meetings, task that will be completed, and a meeting date/time that works for everyone involved | • Establishing a series of meetings dedicated to the mentoring program  
• Formal assignments, prescribed interactions, set curriculum  
• Needs regular scheduling. |
| Formal Mentoring | Those who engage with one another may have been paired together and have a structured layout and design for their reverse mentor program. There may also be a formal evaluation process for the program or meetings. | • Formally assigning reverse mentorship roles so that the junior employee is able to take ownership and gain respect of upper-management  
• Our methods may not work as we have only 10 people on our staff. Probably something more formal would work best for a larger org.  
• To actually formalize one and should be mandatory once less tech savvy employee has been identified. |
| Formalized Evaluations | Evaluations are conducted to gain an understanding of the successes, limitations, and to measure whether the program is making a difference in the lives of those involved. | • Objectively monitored/assessed.  
• Needs to be formalized and measured |
| Informal/"Just-in-Time" Mentoring | The program has no formal layout or design for those involved. Those who engage with one another may not have been paired together may meet spontaneously, or as needed. There may also be no formal evaluation process for the program or meetings. | • We are working on expanding mentoring as a tool for best practices. You describe, "just-in-time". Just in time is best practice for addressing urgent matters. Formal mentoring does not really work if the parties are forced into the relationship. They're just going through the motions |
| Involvement of Senior Management | • Informal, one on one in a casual setting.  
• Senior managers have to be open minded, and it is hard to mandate that and even harder to teach it -- you either are or you are not  
• Senior leadership mandates that top executives at the company (including themselves) take on a reverse mentor. |
| Matching the Mentor and Mentee | • Should be structured (i.e. intentional pairings, based on either similarities or differences) and ongoing.  
• One that is organized and strategically set up with mentees and mentors who have identified a need  
• I think a best practice is assessing the skill gaps of both parties. This seems like a great first step in making a mutually beneficial match.  
• I asked my mentor to mentor me, so I would suggest that those who are seeking mentorships to go out and figure out what the senior people in their organizations do and align themselves with the ones doing the work they'd like to do.  
• Being strategic about the partnerships/mentorships (fitting the right people together) and providing the right outlet for it to succeed. |
| Meets Business/Client Needs | • One that meets the program criteria and is implemented consistently throughout the organization  
• In our environmental we would have to look at what our parallel institutions are king and assess those benchmarks |
| Small Groups | • Creating two-to-five people teams and tasking them according to their talents (i.e. one on particular targeted constituency, one on regional media, one on social) has proved successful  
• I don't believe I've seen any formal models. However, if I were to start a formal program, I would likely hold a mixer within the organization of people |
who were open/interested in participating, and allow pairings or small groups to naturally coalesce. The organization must be authentic in its support for these gatherings and for allowing the time for mentors/mentees to interact and feel comfortable together.
What advice do you have for others who want to succeed with reverse mentoring?

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| Be Open                | The mentor and mentee have to both have an open mind set about the learning experience. | • Older employees need to see the value in learning from digital natives.  
• Older employees must be encouraged to be open to younger professionals and not feel threatened by admitting a lack of knowledge.  
• Go into it with an open mind. No holes barred.  
• Being open to suggestions on both ends. It is not always easy to take advice from someone younger or in a lower position. Taking advice both ways will help from the superior feeling inferior, and therefore pulling away from the mentorship relationship. Everyone can learn from each other  
• Be open, but recognize that with technology, the younger or more junior person may not know how to strategically use the technology |
| Be Humble Not Arrogant | Both parties involved have to be willing to acknowledge how the relationship will help, without having a pessimistic demeanor about the experience. | • The mentor being humble enough to acknowledge how the relationship has helped without being worried about lack of knowledge having a negative impact on their employment position  
• Take it seriously and give it the time and energy you would other forms of mentorship  
• Younger professionals must understand that this particular expertise does not mean they are experienced or superior in all facts of the organization.  
• Millennials need to learn and practice patience with older, less tech-savvy people. |
| Benefits Both Parties Involved | • One should not feel as though they will be punished for being open and transparent in their feedback. |
| Benefits Both Parties Involved | • Be proactive rather than reactive concerning your program which will ultimately benefit both the mentor's company and mentee's career prospects |
| Benefits Both Parties Involved | • Ensure that the mentoring is happening two-way, as you want both parties to buy in and feel that they play an important role and have something to contribute. |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | • Try to establish formal measurement of outcomes. |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | • Teaching and learning go hand-in-hand; it's important to share knowledge and emphasis continuing education within the organization. |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | • Identify, clearly, the specific knowledge that he or she would like to learn about BEFORE the engagement happens |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | • Expand the tools and range in how it is implemented. Mentoring as a leadership, preparation tool needs a persistent overhaul |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | • Be sure to explain that this program has been created to make each person more knowledgeable and better well rounded. |
| Have Program Goals and Objective | • Build a program that works for your specific needs and ties to your goals. |
| Just Do It | • Try it and evolve it as you do it. |
| Just Do It | • Just do it |
| Just Do It | • Commit to it |
| Make it a Priority for Everyone | • Make it a priority in the environment and part of the culture |
| Make it a Priority for Everyone | • Don’t leave it to the elders to volunteer to participate -- it must be required. |
| Matching the Mentor and Mentee | Pair mentors and mentees together who have similar career goals, life experiences, values, and etc. | • When partnering people, you must take into account their personalities.  
• The obvious: find out someone you can relate to, for a variety of reasons: social/ethnic/cultural background, or someone who understands the value of mentoring in the long run.  
• Spend informal time getting to know each other. |
- Does your company train the mentors, mentees, or both? If so, how do they train the individuals?

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<tr>
<td>Hands-On Training</td>
<td>Active personal involvement in the task being learned or taught.</td>
<td>• Hands on work for a management training program with direction from more senior managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mentor works with mentees to enhance mentee skills in writing, layout and strategic thinking.</td>
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<td>On-the-Job Training</td>
<td>A form of training taking place in a normal working situation through seminars, group work with other employees, or other activities within the work environment.</td>
<td>• On-the-job learning/training; some formal skill training</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Through on-the-job plus PD seminars</td>
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<td>One-On-One/In-Person Training</td>
<td>Training between two people-formal or informal</td>
<td>• One-on-one ad hoc</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal and informal leadership and mentoring training. Online and in person</td>
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<td>• Our Dir. Human Resources has a training program and individually trains each person on her own.</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Other training techniques utilized.</td>
<td>• Exposure to media marketing skills and sports broadcast operations.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• They start off in junior positions in teams with others and they grow as they gain experience</td>
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<td>Seminars/Webinars/Workshops</td>
<td>A live meeting that takes place over the web, in-person, or in groups. The meeting can be a presentation, discussion, demonstration, or instructional session.</td>
<td>• Webinars</td>
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<td>• Workshops</td>
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Appendix I: Research Terminology

AHANA: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian American, and Native Americans (Hallahan, 1997, p. 64).

Best Practice: A practice that is most appropriate under the circumstances, as considered acceptable or regulated in business; a technique or methodology that through experience and research has reliably led to a desired or optimum result (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Diversity: The inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socio economic stratum, sexual orientation, etc.: (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Formal Mentoring: Formal, mentorships are typically not based on an initial informal relationships or interactions between organizational members. The matching process between mentor and protégé may range from random assignment to it being based on protégé files (Chao, Gardner & Walz, 1992).

Informal Mentoring: Informal mentorships can be based on work or non-work issues. The mentor would select a protégé with whom they can identify with and are willing to devote their attention (Chao, Gardner & Walz, 1992).

Minority: A racial, ethnic, religious, or social subdivision of a society that is subordinate to the dominant group in political, financial, or social power without regard to the size of these groups (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Millennials: Millennials, the cohort of Americans born between 1980 and the mid-2000s, are the largest generation in the U.S., representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013. This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date: 42 percent identify with a race or ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic white, around twice the share of the Baby Boomer generation when they were the same age. About 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended college, whereas only 46 percent of the Baby Boomers did so (The White House, 2014).

Reverse Mentoring: Reverse mentoring involves a structured or unstructured workplace relationship between senior professionals and younger/less experienced workers. Typically, the younger
workers have less expertise within the organization but more technological familiarity and skills. The pairing of senior professionals with more technologically knowledgeable workers brings about the education of those less technologically inclined (Pyle, 2005, p.

**Strategic Communications:**
Strategic communication is a term used to denote the higher-level concerns behind communicative efforts by organizations to advance organizational mission. It is, therefore, inherently multidisciplinary as work in this area draws on literature from a wide array of other subfields, including public relations, marketing, advertising, and management (Thorson, 2013). This approach is particularly valuable given the increasing difficulty faced by organizations in differentiating among communication activities (and results) appropriately “owned” by various functional groups.