

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE PR INDUSTRY – WHAT’S THE STATUS QUO?



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A review of ICCO’s World PR Report’s findings point to a very mixed global picture across the three key areas of having in-house D&I policies, reviewing these policies on an ongoing basis, and being an employer that ensures representation and diversity in the workforce.

The Report highlights some interesting contradictions. For example, whilst the USA and UK score well on raising the importance of diversity and inclusion over the period, their sector falls on as being “not representative” of local ethnic demographics. The picture across the rest of the world is mixed – Latin America and Western Europe score below five, whereas Eastern Europe, Africa, APAC and Middle East are more optimistic in their outlook but showcasing there is still some room for improvement across the board.

When working on a global scale, we must not assume the term diversity means the same thing everywhere. If you have offices in India, Brazil, UAE and Korea for instance, you will be facing different challenges and expectations, therefore it is important to consult different experts for each marketplace and customise your approach. Even within the same country, this may vary region to region, and it is important to be sensitive of this.

What are the ways to improve then – to make a real change? The key is to be proactive, to engage and to prove authenticity – EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER.

- **EDUCATE:** raise awareness of what the real challenge is and how to become more inclusive internally and externally – get coaches involved, ensure to seek advice from those with relevant experience in diversity matters whatever the angle (gender, ethnicity, mobility, mental health).
- **ENGAGE:** getting activists on the subject matter is also very powerful. They may not be experts in your industry or subject matter but are certainly the most engaged on this topic and will work as a great sounding board for initiatives you are developing. This is also sending a message to the industry and your audiences that you are active in making this change happen.

- **EMPOWER:** look at developing internal tools and guidelines, such as Cultural Compasses to support your teams in the long run. Whether you are externally or internally facing, the input of cultural experts or semioticians to soundproof and feed your initiatives and messages will ensure they land well and are always inclusive.

In conclusion, it is a message of possibilities and of hope. More and more companies and brands now understand and value the importance of diversity and inclusion and are actively looking at resolving both international and domestic challenges around the whole topic and throughout their organisations and communications.

As raised by Neuroscience Consultant and Author, Hilary Scarlett, it is proven that diversity increases productivity at work: “Research studies show that diverse teams can have a positive impact on the quality of our thinking. It interrupts one of our brain’s shortcuts where we tend to behave unthinkingly as others do.” Therefore, the benefits are not just relevant to certain groups or the world of Comms but can be seen across the organisation.