

VPM Results Against Year One DEI Roadmap

VPM's DEI Intention states that VPM will reflect the communities we serve, which means we will:

1. Ensure people in our community see themselves through the stories we tell.
2. Provide equal opportunities for all employees.
3. Cultivate a workplace where our employees feel valued.

To execute on this intention, we created a year one roadmap to prioritize our work and hold ourselves accountable. Overall, we made significant progress and learned several notable lessons to inform our efforts going forward.

Importantly, DEI work is a journey, not a final destination, especially since many of the projects and initiatives we began will be on-going. Going forward, we will need to determine how to track progress longitudinally as well as by year.

Content

In Content, the team has been focused on ensuring our body of work and content creators reflect the demographics of VPM's DMA. To that end, an anonymous survey process was implemented to follow up with content partners, including talent, guests and production teams and request they self-identify in several DEI-related areas, including race, gender, age and more. This work is ongoing for video and podcasting content. We realized that the anonymous nature of the current survey does not allow for year-over-year comparisons, so we are revising the survey instrument and approach to remove the anonymity and better track individual answers. In addition, we are exploring ways to refine the process to leverage and more efficiently use our time. VPM News is developing its own method to track sources. The team is wrestling with how to capture this information during the newsgathering process and not intimidate those being interviewed.

Content proposals are being reviewed by a team that represents departments from across the organization. All proposals now undergo three phases of review before greenlighting. Having community engagement staff embedded with the content team is critical to improve communications about our programming, build community connections with educators and individuals and foster partnerships with other community groups. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) members are being leveraged for their community insights and connections, the identification of issues critical to their geographic regions and to provide feedback on content proposals and programming. We will continue to iterate on the best use of the CAB members' time while continuing to seek their input on the products we create.

People

We made progress in diversifying our staff, boards and volunteers. Regarding VPM staff, key work included:

- Training by VPM's HR department with hiring managers to help identify unconscious biases during the hiring process;
- Ensuring job openings were clearly communicated within VPM and posted through a diverse set of partner organizations; and
- Strengthening our internship program by deepening relationships with HBCUs and local colleges and universities.

For our volunteers, both at the governing board and CAB level, we have implemented surveys for people to self-identify demographic traits to inform gaps of representation.

Policies

To foster an environment that supports a sense of belonging for each individual at VPM, we embarked on mandatory training for all employees. VPM hired the Avent Consulting Group to lead intensive education to establish shared language and expectations for our culture. This was an important first step to foster more self-awareness and how to be more empathetic to our fellow colleagues. One learning is that training is just the first step in the ongoing work needed to build an inclusive and diverse workplace.

Other important activities including implementing a salary-benchmarking survey with an external party to ensure pay equity, updating the VPM Employee Handbook and making it accessible online and improving the annual employee review process.

Surprisingly, determining how to celebrate individual and team wins has been much more complex than we thought. Once we started talking to employees, we realized there was a spectrum of feelings about how individuals want to be recognized.