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A cultural confluence: approaches to embedding cultural insights and inclusion throughout the marketing process

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A CULTURAL CONFLUENCE: APPROACHES TO EMBEDDING CULTURAL

INSIGHTS AND INCLUSION THROUGHOUT THE MARKETING PROCESS

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A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

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_____

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

_____

by

Carol Anne Watson

August 2014

This research project, completed by

CAROL ANNE WATSON

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been

submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business

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MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study explored the culturally driven variables in the marketing process that contribute to a brand's success or minimize cultural missteps. The primary research question was: How are consumer brand organizations building capabilities and organizing to embed cultural inclusion and insights throughout the marketing communications process? Twenty senior-level marketing executives contributed to the mixed-methods study. Five critical variables were found to be consistent across industries: effective data collection, reporting, and integration are critical; leadership must be courageous and culturally skilled; strategic alignment around cultural inclusion throughout the enterprise and across internal and external stakeholders is necessary; culturally adaptive talent management is required; and an end-to-end focus and recalibration of the processes requires resource investments and a commitment to hardwire a refined approach. Recommendations for leveraging the variables included a greater focus on data integration, inclusive leadership development, process recalibration and development of cultural agility competencies, and knowledge sharing across industries.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Demographic and cultural shifts occurring in the domestic United States (US) and around the globe are effecting the marketing communications of consumer brands. These shifts invite new ways for organizations to prepare to work now and in the future. There are increasing demands as well as opportunities to transform organizations to better engage all potential employees, stakeholders, and culturally diverse consumers by hearing the full symphony.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how consumer brand organizations sustainably embed cultural inclusion throughout the marketing communications process for business performance. The primary research question was: How are consumer brand organizations building capabilities and organizing to embed cultural inclusion and insights throughout the marketing communications process? The following subquestions were also explored through this research:

1. What components and framework support embedding cultural inclusion for sustainable results?

2. Where in the organizational design and process are there needs or barriers to cultural inclusion?

3. What gaps between current and desired states, if any, exist in the structures, processes, or talent management?

Research Significance

The stakes are high for the major consumer brand marketers surveyed. In 2013, the average annual revenue of those organizations interviewed was $27 billion. A shift as small as 1% in revenue share can represent billions of dollars potentially gained or lost for these marketers and other large organizations. In 2013, $508 billion were spent on advertising worldwide (GroupM, 2013). Successfully engaging or risking negative stereotypes or perceptions of exclusion from culturally diverse consumers can mean the difference between achieving business performance goals or not.

The advertising and marketing industry is still challenged in effectively representing and leveraging cultural differences. Brands are borrowing from other ethnic and racial cultures with mixed results. The Volkswagen "Get in, Get Happy" commercial featured in the 2013 Superbowl with a Wisconsin employee imitating a Jamaican accent was criticized in the mainstream press for being racially insensitive (Diaz, 2013). A Summer's Eve online ad was pulled for being racially insensitive ("Summer's Eve," 2011). An Adage article announces J.C. Penney as ripping up its marketing playbook and designing the integrated marketing and store experience as a department-store destination for Hispanics (Zmuda, 2014). The changes include marketing communications, product offerings, store music, and signage. Debra Berman, Senior Vice-President Marketing, J. C. Penney (as cited in Zmuda, 2014), commented, "Our Latina customer is increasingly reshaping the general market" (para. 5).

The early results for J.C. Penney are measurable increases in perception by consumers. While an increasingly culturally diverse consumer population will not agree on the effectiveness of the advertising and marketing communications, the use of

marketing and communications messaging that accesses cultural insights will undoubtedly increase as the consumer population continues to become more culturally diverse (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). Organizational culture and processes will be significantly impacted financially by the transformation to an inclusive process. Conversely, there is a high cost of crisis management, lost consumer good will and purchasing as a result of racial and cultural blind spots and missteps in the process along the way.

Cross-Cultural Marketing is Increasingly More Complex and Vital to Growth

The 2010, US census data confirmed the growth of minorities in increasing markets spanning the country has made cross-cultural marketing and sales a crucial ingredient to success (US Census Bureau, 2012). The consumer market is rapidly changing demographically. One in every three births in the US is now a child of color (Passel, Livingston, & Cohn, 2012). Minorities are becoming the new majority, and the geographic distributions and millennial attitudes toward differences are changing how consumers want to see their differences portrayed in media and advertising. This shift requires a more complex and intuitive approach to targeted marketing.

Globally, brand growth will come from markets that experience their culture and multiculturalism differently than in the US. Emerging growth markets tend not to have the same marketing and advertising structure of general market and multicultural market specialties, nor do they tend to be as fearful of discussing race and religion, as is often the case in Western Europe and the US. "In India, people are much more willing to talk about race and religion, especially about religion. . . . They will even make fun of

stereotypes. . . . People want their diversity to be recognized" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 52).

Brands are increasingly depending on underserved and emerging markets, both in the US and more importantly on a global stage, to realize revenue growth and competitive share growth. Top consumer brands are even returning to a more diverse US to build sales. Roze (as cited in Neff, 2013), a Managing Director of L'Oréal, stated, "The percentage of Hispanics, Asians and African-Americans keeps growing. They contribute to winning elections but, more importantly, they're over-indexing in consumers of beauty products" (para. 9). Their increased focus in engaging this diverse consumer is one reason L'Oréal attributes to the move up to No. 5 from No. 25 among top media spenders in the US (Neff, 2013).

The integrated marketing communications process is composed of a variety of internal resources and an external network of organizations that work interdependently. These systems have traditionally worked in an either general market or multicultural market approach. The domestic US and global cultural shift has created a demand to approach the work and the network of organizations in a different way to be effective. Lizette Williams (as cited in Cartagena, 2013), Senior Brand Manager for Kimberly Clark, stated, "We have to reframe the conversation" (para. 10). At a 2013 ANA Marketing Conference, Lauventria Robinson (as cited in Cartenega, 2013), Vice-President, Multicultural Marketing for Coca-Cola shared her views on marketers shifting from multicultural teams to total market strategy and noted that obtaining the resources and convincing organizations to embrace a new approach will require a new look at the

organizational processes and structures currently in place, "push[ing] the envelope and forc[ing] partners to work better together" (para. 11).

This thesis examined organizational processes and interventions in marketing and sales-driven organizations both internally and externally. It explored participant experiences in transforming to a culturally inclusive process and the impact the transformation is having on the organization and brand performance.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 introduced the concept of cultural inclusion in the marketing process and its importance to brand and business growth domestically and globally. The current discussion and challenges in the advertising industry and campaign examples were reviewed. This chapter also discussed the importance of the study, what external forces and triggers influence the focus, and how the topic was explored.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on the topic, an exploration of culture, defining terms domestically and the global dynamics. The role culture plays in the marketing and branding process is explored. The role branding plays in the organizations health overall is also explored. The integrated marketing communications process is described in detail. Trends in multicultural marketing and the evolution of the total market strategy as a change in focus in the industry is reviewed. The latest discussions in the literature on diversity and inclusion are reviewed in relation to leveraging talent. Galbraith's (2001) star model of organizational design is reviewed and defined for use as a diagnostic tool to explore the organizational variables under consideration.

Chapter 3 offers an overview of the study methods and design. The research design is discussed first, followed by a description of the procedures related to sampling, data collection, and data analysis conducted.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and describes the data collection results. The online survey results are reported, and the thematic results emerging from the interview discussions also are reviewed. Areas of similarity and contrast are highlighted.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion and interpretation of the research findings and conclusions. Limitations to the study are cited, and recommendations are made to the case organizations as well as to other organizations embarking on a similar transformation. Suggestions for further research are also made.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the current literature on the study topic an exploration of culture, defining terms domestically and the global dynamics. Competing on the quickly changing domestic and global stages is becoming increasingly challenging for consumer brands. The top brands, as a result, are placing a higher priority on cultural inclusion to drive business success. In a 2012 Forbes Insights study, 33% of senior executive participants working at the largest consumer brands responded that leveraging diversity and inclusion to drive business goals and innovation is of increased importance over the next 3 years (Forbes, 2011). Only 7% of 321 total of these same executives surveyed expressed having no barriers to their diversity and inclusion effort (Forbes, 2011).

While much work has been started by the leading consumer brands in leveraging cultural inclusion in their marketing communications process, the shifts in business strategy, consumer needs, and competitive pressures will require increasing efforts and focus on the organizational structure and processes to reduce the barriers to business performance. Creating sustainable management organization practices around cultural inclusion will be a greater priority moving forward. Building capabilities to bend and flex with the increased rate of change in demographics and culture is a recent and growing need. The remainder of the chapter provides a literature review of the leading organizational theories, frameworks, and research on cultural inclusion within the integrated marketing communications process and the organizational dynamics necessary for brand success moving forward.

Domestic and Global Consumer Shift

The importance of adapting to culturally diverse consumers is greater than at any other time for organizations and will continue to grow. For the first time, racial and ethnic minorities now make up more than half the children born in the US. Among people 18 years of age and under, 33% reported being racial or ethnic minorities, compared to 10% of their parents' generation domestically (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 73). This growing US domestic multicultural market is increasingly becoming the new general market (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). The growth of the US labor force now and for the foreseeable future will be largely composed of women, minorities, and immigrants (Thomas, 2009). Not only is there a population shift, the divergence of cultural difference will remain of high value to consumers. In the US and in global markets individuals are increasingly celebrating their differences and becoming less amenable to compromising what makes them unique. The inclination to celebrate personal culture represents a marked departure from previous times when there was a predisposition to "fit in" and minimize differences. This growing diverse consumer has an expectation of acceptance and adaptation in both the workplace and from consumer brands (Hofstede, 2010).

As the consumer becomes more demanding, business will be required to respond to maintain a competitive advantage. The rise of the customer dimension and the increasing importance of the customer is a growing trend, particularly in global markets (Galbraith, 2001). The factors contributing to this increase are the globalization of the customer, the preference of customers for partnerships or relationships, the customers desire for solutions, the rise of electronic commerce and the steady increase in the power of the buyer (Galbraith, 2001).

Culture's Role in Brand Marketing and the Organization

The impact of culture on brands has recently become understood. The role of culture on business has been studied for over 30 years, and increasingly so as global markets continue to grow in importance. There are many definitions of culture, which have been studied extensively (Hofstede, 2010; Schein, 2009; Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2004). For the purposes of this discussion of both consumer and organizational culture, Schein's (2009) definition will be referenced and applied to ethnic, national, racial, gender, sexual orientation, religious, age, organizations, groups, and so forth. Culture is a pattern of basic assumptions—"invented, discovered, or developed" (Schein, 2009, p. 32) by a given group as it learns "to cope with its . . . problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1983, p. 1). Teerikangas and Hawk (2002) noted,

> Culture can be regarded as a system, even a complex system. It is comprised of more than two actors that are interrelated and interacting together. Together they form a culture, whereas if kept separate they would only be personalities. Culture is a chief characteristic in a human system. (p. 12)

People from different cultures see, interpret, and evaluate events, and consequently the use of brands and their marketing communications messaging in different ways, and could act upon them differently. "Understanding and appreciation for the different beliefs, behaviors, and values of varying subjective cultures" (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, p. 8) can improve brand performance. "Such understanding and appreciation can provide access to the differing cultural experience of others and enable mutual adaptation" (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, p. 8).

The interpretive element of culture has particular applications to consumer brands

acceptance and perceptions in various cultures. Global marketers and their agency

partners can often use locally adapted approaches to reach the consumer rather than an

overarching global positioning in their marketing communications.

> The rationale for a multi-target approach is that product benefits are culturally
> determined; different cultural values lead to an appreciation of different kinds of
> communications, social interactions, habits, norms of behaviors – all of which are
> depicted in advertisements, especially those depicting "slice-of-life" appeals.
> (Ambwani, Heslop, & Dyke, 2011, p. 334)

The impact of culture on product consumption can even be aligned with

Hofstede's (2010) dimensions.

> Many consumption differences can be explained and predicted by analysing the
> relationships between consumption and scores on Hofstede's dimensions of
> national culture. For example, culture has been shown to influence the volume of
> mineral water and soft drinks consumed, preferences for new or used cars,
> ownership of insurance products, possession of private gardens, readership of
> newspapers and books, television viewing, ownership of consumer electronics,
> use of the internet, use of cosmetics, deodorants, toothpaste and hair care
> products, and consumption of fresh fruit, ice-cream and frozen food as well as
> numerous other products and services. (De Mooij, 2003, pp. 190–191)

In his book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking,* Malcolm Gladwell

(2005) explained the importance of building a competency and process around culture

when building consumer brands. Gladwell described how intuition could be powerful yet

could also lead people astray. The frames of reference used, or more importantly,

individuals worldviews, effect how people might interpret what we see. There are serious

consequences to misinterpreting what one sees, and each culture attaches different

meanings to what they see. According to Gladwell, "For the first time in human history

people from across the world meet and work with each other and face the challenges of

being effective in a setting with a high degree of informational complexity and contextual

uncertainty" (Teerikangas & Hawk, 2002, p. 8). The global environment requires consumers and marketers embrace "diversity in complex settings while . . . thinking pattern[s] remain fixed in a 'mono-cultural' view based on traditional boundaries and rational thinking" (Teerikangas & Hawk, 2002, p. 8).

Ignoring the influence of culture has led some global companies to centralize operations and marketing to increase efficiency (De Mooij, 2003). Many of these same companies saw their profits decline as a result. The centralized control lacked local sensitivities, and most global consumer brands now adapt local strategies. De Mooij (2003) cited Coca-Cola's CEO to illustrate how large multinational organizations are shifting "their strategies from global to local" (p. 184) markets:

> "We kept standardizing our practices, while local sensitivity had become absolutely essential to success." Coca-Cola's marketing chief stated that the firm's "big successes have come from markets where we read the consumer psyche every day and adjust the marketing model every day" (Byrnes 2000). (p. 184)

Consumer Brand Health is a Reflection of Organizational Vitality

A strong consumer brand is a reflection of the overall health of the organization. Recognizing "some of the marketplace benefits that are created from having a strong brand" (Keller, 2009, p. 140) establishes "the value of a brand to an organization" (p. 140). Hoeffler and Keller (as cited in Keller, 2009) noted the following possible benefits:

- improved perceptions of product performance;
- greater customer loyalty;
- less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and marketing crisis;
- larger margins;
- more elastic customer response to price decreases and inelastic customer response to price increase;
- greater trade or intermediary support and cooperation;
- increased marketing communications effectiveness; [and]
- additional licensing and brand extension opportunities. (p. 140)

There is great potential impact of brand management and marketing to the entire organization. Building a strong brand is, therefore, a management priority (Aaker, 1991, 1996).

The brand knowledge that the consumer has "is not the facts about the brand – it is all the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences and so on that become linked to the brand in the minds of consumers" (Keller, 2009, p. 143). Marketing communications activities contribute to brand equity and drive sales by creating awareness of the brand and "linking the right associations to the brand image in consumers' memory; eliciting positive brand judgments or feelings; and /or facilitating a stronger consumer–brand connection" (Keller, 2009, pp. 145–146). Nike, Axe body spray, and Apple brands are examples of products with strong brand equity (Keller, 2009).

> In today's changing and more complex marketing environment, marketers must develop a different mindset to build customer loyalty and establish brand resonance. . . . [Now] customers know more about companies behind a brand, they communicate with each other and . . . can have strong opinions about what they want companies to be doing with their brands. (Keller, 2009, p. 152)

A Focus on Integrated Marketing Communications Process

The influence of marketing communications on our society and culture is significant. Belch and Belch (2011) noted, "Consumers are finding it increasingly difficult to avoid the efforts of marketers, who are constantly searching for new ways to communicate with them" (p. 15). "Organizations in both the private and public sectors have learned that the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with their target audiences is critical to their success" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 22). "The influence of marketing communication is felt wide and deep" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 22).

Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind consumers—directly or indirectly—about the products and brands they sell. In a sense, marketing communications represent the 'voice' of the company and its brands and are a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with and among consumers. (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 15)

At the marketing level, companies send messages to customers and other stakeholders through all aspects of their marketing mixes, not just promotion. Consumers make inferences about a product on the basis of elements such as its design, appearance, performance, pricing, service support, and where and how it is distributed. (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 34)

"The marketing communications mix consists of eight major modes of communication" (Zheng, 2013, para. 5; see Table 1). The first four can be seen as mass media types of communications; the latter four are personal modes of communication (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

The term *integrated marketing communications* has evolved since 1980 and is used throughout the remainder of this thesis. Belch and Belch (2011) described integrated marketing communications (IMC) as the "emergent strategic business process within marketing used to develop, execute and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communications programs over time with customers, employees, associates and other targeted relevant internal and external audiences" (p. 49). "The goal is to generate both short-term financial returns and build long-term brand and shareholder value" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 52). The authors then go on to enumerate the concept of IMC management as the "process of planning, executing, evaluating and controlling the use of various promotional mix elements to effectively communicate with a target market" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p.54). Other authors defined integrated communications as the "notion and practice of aligning symbols, messages, procedures and behaviors in order to communicate with clarity, consistency and continuity within and across organizational

boundaries" (Christensen, Firat, & Torp, 2008, p. 432). These researchers noted the

importance of integration of communications, particularly on a global stage, stating that it

is imperative for success (Christensen et al., 2008).

Table 1
Major Communication Types

Forms of Communication	Definition
Advertising	Any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.
Sales Promotion	A variety of short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of a product or service.
Events and Experiences	Company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create daily or special brand-related interactions.
Public Relations and Publicity	A variety of programs designed to promote or protect a company's image or its individual products.
Direct Marketing	Use of mail, telephone, fax, email, or Internet to communicate directly with or solicit response or dialogue from specific customers and prospects.
Interactive Marketing	Online activities and programs designed to engage customers or prospects and directly or indirectly raise awareness, improve image, or elicit sales of products and services.
Word-of-Mouth Marketing	People-to-people oral, written or electronic communications, which relate to the merits or experiences of purchasing or using products or services.
Personal Selling	Face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions and procuring orders.

Note. From "Designing and Managing Integrated Marketing Communications" by E. Zheng, 2013, *Marketing Management and Analysis.* Copyright 2013 by E. Zheng. Reprinted with permission.

Practitioners have expanded the link between IMC and "corporate design, corporate culture, public relations and corporate communication (Van Riel, 1995; Baker and Balmer, 1997; Balmer and Greyser, 2003; Christensen et al., 2008)" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 424). Companies are realizing they communicate to consumers and stakeholders in "everything they say or do" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 425).

In 2009, Kotler and Armstrong looked at sustainability from a marketing slant. They defined *sustainable marketing* as "marketing that meets the present needs of consumers and businesses while also preserving and enhancing the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (p. 103).

The IMC model presented was used in this research as the framework for comparing the most success consumer brands and their process of conscious cultural inclusion. The model is used most often with study participants and refers to an industry-accepted practice.

Cultural Inclusion in Multicultural Marketing Process

For the purposes of this thesis multicultural marketing is defined as a strategy targeting various ethnically diverse populations. The term *total market approach* refers to a broad and culturally inclusive consumer population (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). At the time of this thesis writing the Association of National Advertisers was in the process of refining the definition of multicultural marketing. Researchers have discussed "the significance of understanding the ethnic minority subcultures and associated cultural dimension to marketing (Burton, 2000; Bouchet, 1995; Costa and Bamossay, 1995; Penaloza and Gilly, 1999)" (Jamal, 2007, p. 3), which is supported by the realization that the ethnic minority subcultures "are growing in size and have an increased purchasing

power accompanied by heightened political and cultural awareness and ethnic pride (Cui, 1997; Penaloza and Gilly, 1999)" (p. 3). The research findings suggested that there are significant differences in consumption patterns of ethnic minority consumer groups in comparison to their mainstream counterparts (Jamal, 2007). Many marketers in the US have long adapted "their marketing mix strategies to target ethnic minority consumers (Edward, 1994; Gore, 1998; Holliday, 1993; McDermott, 1994; Mummert, 1995)" (Jamal, 2007, p. 8). Marketers in Europe have been slower in realizing the impact of cultural diversity on their marketing programs (Jamal, 2007).

From a marketing perspective, the value of identifying the ethnicity of consumers lies in the ability to predict the consumption and buying behavior of a particular group of individuals. Being able to do so increases the effectiveness of marketing communications and the ability to efficiently deliver product offerings to meet consumer needs (Kennedy & Hall, 2006). There is a research debate around the effectiveness of ethnicity as a basis for traditional methods of target marketing and segmentation due to the changeable nature of ethnic identity, the effects of acculturation, and the emergence of bicultural individuals (Kennedy & Hall, 2006, p. 73).

Target marketing is often thought of in advertising campaigns, media, promotional, event, and public relations outreach but can also include creating or adapting brands or services and product development for a specific segment of the population (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). These targeted efforts can include pricing, flavors, packaging, or product features; it can also include retail merchandising and product selection or media allocation and brand channel targeting (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011).

Product or service development and innovation can be the most important component, as it relates to the end benefit consumers will experience. Those products or services that have mined product development opportunities to reach ethnic markets in the US and in other multicultural societies are the industries or categories that are closer to their consumer, such as retail-driven categories, financial services, clothing, restaurants, and supermarkets (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). Additionally, personal care and beauty categories also achieve value in adapting their product offerings to culturally targeted consumers. The food and beverage category is another large segment that marketers often adapt not only taste and ingredients, but also for lifestyle and religion to targeted cultures (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011).

Cultural Inclusion Points Throughout the Integrated Marketing Communications Process

Cultural inclusion applications in the marketing process can include seeking out new growth opportunities, attracting new consumers, and gaining market share. There are a variety of areas in the marketing and promotional process where cultural inclusion maybe impacted. Identifying the target audience is the first step in the marketing process, and it is a prime source of cultural inclusion (Belch & Belch, 2011). Translating marketing goals into communications and promotional objectives are some of the other areas in the IMC process are IMC. The competitive analysis and brand positioning may also have a cultural significance (Belch & Belch, 2011).

Consumer behavior of a culture or subculture using qualitative and quantitative consumer research may offer some inclusion insights. Areas to explore might include focus groups and ethnographic research to understand consumer behavior and creative

insights for the brand (Solomon, 2006). The communications message is developed using an encoding process, which contains the information, or meaning the source hopes to convey; the message maybe verbal or nonverbal, oral, written, or symbolic (Solomon, 2006, 238). For many products, it is not the actual words of the message that determine its communication effectiveness but rather the impression or image the ad creates. Brands using inappropriate cultural images and symbols in their communications have had a disastrous effect on performance (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 148). To better understand the symbolic meaning that might be conveyed in a communication, advertising and marketing researchers have focused on semiotics, which studies the nature of meaning and asks how our reality, the "words, gestures, myths, signs, symbols, products/services, theories" (Solomon, 2006, p. 238) develops this meaning (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 148).

The creative strategy process is an important area in the process for conscious inclusion intervention. "Advertising appeals to and can often create or shape, consumers' problems, desires, and goals" (Belch & Belch, 2011, 243). "From the marketer's perspective, the advertising message is a way to tell consumers how the product or service can solve a problem or help satisfy desires or achieve goals" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 243). "Advertising can also be used to create images or associations and position a brand in the consumer's mind as well as transform the experience of buying and/or using a product or service" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 243).

The channel is the communication source from the sender to the end consumer; this includes mass media and face-to-face communications such as events, promotions, public relations. This area has significant potential for cultural influence and interpretation by subcultures and target markets (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 149). The

media planning process allocates the budgets to specific media vehicles and outlets based on target marketing objectives and the creative execution. Media advertising is often the most visible part of the promotional process (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 4).

Many marketers have discovered that sales promotion techniques are often more effective than traditional media advertising alone to reach theses cultural markets and can be valuable in developing relationships with consumers (Belch & Belch, 2011). Event marketing is another area that marketers are focusing on to build relationships with subcultures of their target market tied to promotions and sampling and publicity initiatives.

Leading Practices

There is a shift from a separate multicultural marketing budget and initiative to an integration of the general market, which uses changes in demographics and the drivers of business growth coming from ethnically diverse markets. The profile of leading practice brands, according to Burgos and Mobolade (2011), are those most aggressively transforming their organizations. There are areas of focus and drivers identified that are most important in shifting the organizational culture to seize the consumer cultural trends. The leading brands "are fully committed, from the top down, to the idea that the mainstream is multicultural" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 112).

Leader brands have integrated ethnic marketing throughout their corporate culture. In some cases, "marketing managers [are made] responsible for multicultural growth by making it a key performance indicator in employee reviews and tying it into incentive compensation" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 112). Other organizations prefer to embed "multicultural experts across all marketing teams" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011,

p. 112). These leading brands have "both general market and multicultural agencies, with an established protocol for interagency collaboration at the strategic level" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 112). Burgos and Mobolade (2011) found that the corporate leadership of these leading brands have sent a clear messages, both internal and external to the organization, "that ethnic populations will drive their companies' growth moving forward" (p. 112). The leading brands integrate their human resources initiatives as well as general market research strategy and marketing communications to reflect the diversity of the new majority market (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). The leading brand categories are usually those in which ethnic consumers are heavily overindexed, "such as food and beverage, health and beauty aids, entertainment, and certain packaged-goods categories" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 113).

Many of the leading brands are also consolidating their integrated communications partners in an effort to eliminate extraneous marketing efforts and increase efficiency (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). The goal of creating a unified brand message under one agency also presents the challenge of creating effective ethnic campaigns without the representation and cultural competency to leverage the more "nuanced aspects of cultural targeting" (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011, p. 114).

Global Marketing Implications and Trends in Cultural Inclusion

Global brand marketing, for the purposes of this literature review, applies to organizations and brands available around the world (O'Mara & Richter, 2011). "The conditions and attitudes vary greatly worldwide" (O'Mara & Richter, 2011, p. i), whether they are multinational or organizations that maintain a national focus. Belch and Belch (2011) provided another definition: "Global branding having an overarching strategy that

optimizes brand effectiveness in local, regional and international markets" (p. 659). The emergence of a largely borderless world has created new growth opportunities to reach global consumers and build market share in fiercely competitive markets. Faster communications, transportation, and financial transactions have eliminated the barriers that time and distance previously created. Over $500 billion is spent on targeted marketing and promotional around the world with the majority spent in the US (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 110).

There is much evidence to support the belief that having a truly global brand built on shared values with a global advertising message is a myth (De Mooij, 2010, p. 184). The assumption that there are universal values does not mean that every culture expresses and values the same core human abstract values in the same way (De Mooij, 2010, p. 184). For example, how love, happiness, and health are expressed varies from culture to culture. Measuring the effectiveness of an advertising campaign, promotion, or other IMC is usually based on US standards. Global advertising does not appeal to multinational consumers, as there are no universal values. Often a global campaign is developed in London or New York and the result is a campaign driven by Anglo-American values. Consequently, measuring the effectiveness of the IMC against different values is ineffective (De Mooij, 2010, p. 196). Some national cultural responses to communications are at the extreme and some are in the middle. To be effective, product design, retail design, and website design must be adapted to the culture of the consumer or receiver of the message. The customary style of communications of the product packaging, labels, and website also need to reflect the customers' culture.

"Promotion is the most visible as well as the most culture bound of the marketing functions" (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 662). Belch and Belch (2011) noted companies are challenged with unfamiliar environments and customers hold different sets of values, customs, consumption patterns, habits, and different purchasing motives and abilities. For example, the rural areas of India and China are long-term areas of marketing development, and the media outlets are not as effective for reaching these markets (Belch & Belch, 2011, p.664). Rethinking the marketing mix is required. Packaging product into single-use sachets that cost pennies instead of dollars, and refocusing marketing components like word of mouth, which is the most powerful, as well as education, promotions, sampling, road shows, and products sold at small kiosks are examples of adjustments necessary to reach underdeveloped but sizable markets (Belch & Belch, 2011, p. 664).

Think global and act local has been a strategy that most major brands have imposed on their IMC process (Belch & Belch, 2011). For example, McDonald's has used a local approach throughout the world and this has been effective in all locations (Hermeking, 2006). Approaches for achieving cross-cultural marketing goals may not always be as successful. Often the main objective of the brand team is to be efficient by taking one creative idea and executing that idea across all cultural markets (De Mooij, 2003). Driving for consistency in global marketing strategy is an error of the western world (De Mooij, 2003).

A multitarget approach is favored, as most products, with the exception of industrial and consumer durables, are not "culture free" (Ambwani et al., 2011, p. 334) and product benefits are culturally determined. The challenge marketers face is how to

find the balance between developing a global marketing campaign and the need to be sensitive to local countries and cultures (De Mooij, 2003). A company can risk going too far in local adaptation and losing efficiencies. If a brand fails to adapt, the company will lose sales and waste marketing investment. It is the balance between standardization and customization, adding in geographic proximity (De Mooij, 2003). The desire to achieve balance can pose some new and different strategy and cultural inclusion process challenges to organizations.

New Product Development Implications

There are global leading practices for incorporating diversity and inclusion in product and service development. One practice is the product-development cycle, which "recognizes diversity from the outset" (O'Mara & Richter, 2011, p. 11). Organizations cannot "merely 'translate' or 'adapt' products and services [that were] first developed for the majority" (O'Mara & Richter, 2011, p. 11) or they are likely to "make errors based on stereotypes" (p. 11). O'Mara and Richter (2011) stated, "Almost all teams involved in the ongoing development of products and services are diverse and include customers, non-customers, and community representatives" (p. 11). Another leading practice is for organizations to focus on showing "the vital link between diversity and innovation, consistently leveraging D&I [diversity and inclusion efforts] to increase product and service innovation" (O'Mara & Richter, 2011, p. 11). At the end of this process, "the organization sees a strong connection between D&I [diversity and inclusion efforts] and product sustainability, and [therefore] supports bio-diversity initiatives" (O'Mara & Richter, 2011, p. 11).

O'Mara and Richter (2011) listed the following benchmarking standards for marketing components:

- The organization uses sophisticated market analysis techniques on an ongoing basis to understand its diverse customer base.
- The organization is keenly aware of the needs, motivations, and perspectives of diverse customer groups and successfully adapts marketing, sales, and distribution strategies to meet these needs.
- It is expected that the diversity and heterogeneity of customers will likely increase over time, and the ability to successfully serve these differences is continuously reviewed and improvements made.
- To most effectively speak to target audiences, the organization uses a systemic, universal marketing and customer service approach that can be adapted within and across countries, regions, cultures, language and other diversity dimensions. (p. 12)

Shift in Focus From Diversity to Cultural Inclusion

The ability to adapt to the speed of change and competitive advantage with a culturally diverse consumer requires that organizations not only increase their diversity but also place a priority on how crucial consumer cultural differences are adapted inclusively both internally in the organization as well as to the external community (Bassett-Jones, 2005). Bennett and Bennett's (2011) definition of diversity has been adopted for the purposes of this discussion:

> Diversity is defined as cultural differences in values, beliefs, and behaviors learned and shared by groups of interacting people defined by nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, economic status, education, profession, religion, organizational affiliation, and any other grouping that generates identifiable patterns. (Bennett & Bennett, 2011, p. 9)

Managing diversity has primarily focused on human resources and talent management with short-term, tactical initiatives being the focus (Bassett-Jones, 2005). Although a core similarity among group members is desirable, as is organizational coherence and a unity of action, the research reviewed consistently concluded, "The presence of minority views improved the quality of the decision process regardless of whether or not the minority

view ultimately prevailed" (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 2). Thomas and Ely (1996) asserted,

"Diversity should be understood as the varied perspectives and approaches to work that

the members of different identity groups bring" (p. 2). Culturally diverse groups and

others outside the mainstream "don't bring with them just their 'insider information.'

They bring different, important, and competitively relevant knowledge and perspective

about how to actually do work" (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 2). The ability to leverage the

holistic value of diversity with the fresh and meaningful approach to problem solving

results in the most significant business gains. Increased "diversity leads to lower levels of

risk aversion as well as better decision-making and problem-solving capabilities"

(Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 2). "Diversity promotes a more robust critical evaluation of the

first solution to receive substantial support" (Basset-Jones, 2005, p. 172).

For organizations with multicultural customers, the ability to leverage culturally

diverse insights will be crucial to performance and innovation. Research on creativity and

problem solving has confirmed the value of diverse cultures increasing solutions (Leung,

Maddux, Galinsky, & Chieu, 2008, p. 173). Multicultural experiences, like living in other

cultures or at least spending time in cultures other than one's own, may foster creativity

by

> (a) providing direct access to novel ideas and concepts from other cultures,
> (b) creating the ability to see multiple underlying functions behind the same form,
> (c) destabilizing routinized knowledge structures, thereby increasing the
> accessibility of normally inaccessible knowledge, (d) creating a psychological
> readiness to recruit ideas from unfamiliar sources and places, and (e) fostering
> synthesis of seemingly incompatible ideas from diverse cultures. (Leung et al.,
> 2008, p. 173)

Basset-Jones (2005) asserted, "Diversity, combined with an understanding of

individual strengths and weaknesses, and working relationships that are founded upon

sensitivity and trust, have been shown to enhance creativity and problem-solving capability" (Hennessy & Amabile, 1998)" (p. 171). Cox and Blake (1991) detailed the impact on business success from the input and acceptance of diverse cultural groups and explained, "The most direct and effective way to promote influence of minority-culture norms on organizational decision making is to achieve cultural diversity at all organization levels. However, an important supplemental method is through ensuring diversity on key committees" (p. 35). An example is the insistence of USA Today President, Nancy Woodhull, on having gender, racial-ethnic, educational, and geographic diversity represented in all daily news meetings; she attributes much of the company's success to this action (Cox & Blake, 1991).

Diversity has been explored extensively, yet inclusion continues to elude most organizations since you can have diversity without inclusion (Tapia, 2009). Defined by O'Mara and Richter's (2011) global diversity and inclusion standards, "inclusion refers to how diversity is leveraged to create a fair, equitable, healthy, and high-performing organization or community where all individuals are respected, feel engaged and motivated, and their contributions toward meeting organizational and societal goals are valued" (p. i). If the members of a company's community, which includes both internal and external stakeholders (customer, vendors, and employees), do not feel they are full partners in the well-being of the organization, and if they feel their differences create both invisible and visible barriers to their ability to contribute to the fullness of their abilities and ambitions, then there is no inclusion.

The shift in discussion to inclusion is a result of the disappointing outcomes of focusing attention on diversity as a solution to cultural adaptation and leveraging global

markets. In the absence of inclusion, diversity alone leads to performance challenges and slower decision making (De Mooij, 2010). Training sessions typically included in diversity initiatives focus on understanding differences (Davidson, 2011). This is where the impact of training is often short lived and becomes business as usual as a result of the blind spots of the majority status (Davidson, 2011). Most organizations are focused on managing diversity, and the focus often results in resistance to change. The opposition to change often occurs because "managing diversity explicitly or implicitly supports people in groups that are historically disaffected and disenfranchised" (Davidson, 2011, p. 66). Those not in the affected groups "feel excluded from the benefits" (Davidson, 2011, p. 66) of many initiatives and activities and results in resistance preventing sustainable transformation.

Sustainable Inclusion or Leveraging Differences

If an organization is focused on leveraging differences, the focus is on encouraging sustainable competitive advantages in broader ways and are opportunity focused (Davidson, 2011). This includes the human resources focus and talent management in diversity efforts, but goes significantly further to explore "how differences might be integral to the activities that build sustainable competitive advantage: marketing to globally diverse customers, designing more innovative and effective operational processes, and even managing mergers, acquisitions, and trans-organizational alliances" (Davidson, 2011, p. 54). In organizations using a leveraging diversity approach, diversity and inclusion are not mentioned. The focus is on sustainable business innovation and strategic business problem solving by leveraging differences, which may include gender, ethnicity, or generational, experience, and thought (Davidson,

2011). A focus on inclusion that is "strategy-driven and aligned with the organization's purpose" (Davidson, 2011, p. 67) results in significantly less resistance. Identifying the motivators to change around business drivers and market performance results in more sustainable and embedded inclusion (Davidson, 2011).

Whether there is diversity working on the brands or not, organizations must focus on how to be inclusive of diverse cultures representing the consumer requires competency in the marketing process (Davidson, 2011, p. 65). Defining inclusion or leveraging differences "provides [the] connection between strategy and diversity" (Davidson, 2011, p. 65). Organizational success requires "careful alignment of the organizational mission, leadership, practices, systems and culture" (Davidson, 2011, p. 65). The organizational "stakeholders understand and believe that inclusion will make the organization better" (Davidson, 2011, p. 65), which and "instills the commitment and energy required for enduring change and innovation" (p. 65). Tapia (2009) asserted, "True inclusion begins with a deliberate proclamation, but it can't end there. It must then be followed by relentless intentionality at every level of the organization" (p. 15). For organizations to realize the benefit from their employees' cultural expertise, a paradigm shift is required to embrace and value diversity. D. A. Thomas and Ely (1996) provided several practices to facilitate a paradigm shift. Thomas and Ely (as cited in Ambwani et al., 2011) recommended that brand marketers and integrated marketing partners who wish to realize the benefits of employing minority staff and inclusion pursue the following practices:

- Widespread acceptance of different perspectives.
- Open and explicit discussion regarding the implications of diverse backgrounds.

- A realistic recognition of the challenges as well as the learning opportunities that a diverse workforce brings.
- A deep commitment to learning from diversity on the part of the entire organization and especially its leaders. (p. 342)

Ambwani et al. (2011) asserted,

Just hiring minority staff is not sufficient to guarantee success. The organizations (advertisers and agencies) that have successfully developed advertisements for minority targets have frequently gone beyond simply acquiring language skills and hiring a culturally diverse workforce (Interviewee 4). Their strategies frequently include ongoing involvement with the communities and target markets through focus groups, participation in cultural events, and other long-term relationship building activities (Interviewee 4). (p. 342)

The engagement by all members of an organization is crucial.

Driving inclusion "requires creative thinking, careful planning, and a willingness to take risks" (Davidson, 2011, p. 65). In his book *The Inclusion Paradox*, Tapia (2009) quoted Georgia Power's Frank McCloskey, Vice President of Diversity, who, when asked about possible resistance to embedding inclusion into the process by white middle managers, reported "action, not reflection, is their bias" (p. 45). When the action is clear and compelling and when managers are held accountable to results, big changes can happen. In order for this management and culture shift to occur, it must be seen as improving management effectiveness and employee performance. It cannot be seen as "adding to my pile of work" (Tapia, 2009, p. 46).

Transitioning to sustainable inclusion requires a shift in thinking and focus in the organization. This change also includes embedding inclusion into every process and practice that impacts employees. Evaluating the process from the beginning of the relationship at the moment they start working with the organization. Throughout their orientation, training, and promotions, employees should be made to feel part of the overall enterprise (Tapia, 2009). Cox and Blake (1991) described structural integration as

the process that is crucial to move from a pluralist organization to fully leveraging inclusion. Revamping of the reward systems, formal and informal networks, and research, including focus groups and surveys, is necessary. Also reviewing components that include conflict resolution, performance feedback, bias reduction training, are all necessary elements in an organizational structure (Cox & Blake, 1991). Hardwiring inclusion from a high level into the organization's mission, growth, and profitability strategies embeds the process into the organization culture. Going deeper into the marketing communications process and into the creation, design, marketing, and selling of the company's products and services is also required (Cox & Blake, 1991).

Organizational Development in the Cultural Inclusion Marketing Process

Organizations preparing for a culturally diverse marketplace know they must present a clear vision for engaging this evolving consumer. Some of the largest consumer brands have already begun redesigning their infrastructure and operations to meet the marketplace's changing needs (Burgos & Mobolade, 2011). Burgos and Mobolade (2011) noted McDonald's, Diageo, and General Mills incorporate some of these guidelines to meet consumer needs:

1. Develop a vision driven from the C-suite.

2. Develop a workforce that reflects the changing consumer marketplace.

3. Create and leverage an internal team of cultural experts that are well versed in the nuances of the cultural subgroups for educating the sales and marketing teams in the beginning with the goal of empowering the teams to deliver culturally inclusive strategies independent of the multicultural marketing group.

4. Tie cultural engagement to performance reviews and incentive compensation.

5. Set a tone of collaboration with niche culture partners and generalist partners.

Leaders widely acknowledge that integrated communications have significant organizational ramifications, as they impact directly on organizational structures and culture; integrated communications are also known to be a complex organizational issue (Belch & Belch, 2011). One of the biggest challenges in IMC is actually the communications itself, with horizontal communication across departments, which is "crucial for information sharing about target audiences" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 426), being the most common. "As a consequence, the ability to detect and learn about major differences in environments, perspective and practices is seriously curtailed (e.g. Pickton and Broderick, 2001)" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 426). Additionally, rigid job descriptions and organizational structures can sometimes eliminate the incentives to communicate and learn from each other (Schultz & Schultz, 2003).

In addition to proposed horizontal communications processes, Gronstedt (2000) argued for a focus on formal and informal dimensions in communications for the most desirable outcomes. The formal communications would take the shape of "cross-functional, cross-divisional, cross-geographic" (Gronstedt, 2000, p. 37) meetings. An informal communications environment would encourage innovation, learning, and freedom of speech and would contribute most effectively to the work. The trend moving forward will call for "unprecedented levels of diversity, knowledge richness, and turbulence" (Archol, 1991, p. 74). Organizations will need to be "highly flexible . . . to cope with turbulence, ambiguity and diversity" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 432).

Organizations will need to increase their ability to be flexible for the responsiveness and adaptability demanded moving forward (Achrol, 1991).

The complexity of IMC calls for organizations to embrace complexity by building greater competencies for innovation and problem solving. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) highlighted the need for sophisticated observers. That is, the ability of individuals

> to take in more diverse inputs to perceive and utilise subtle variations and nuances missed by other observers. Just as an individual can sensitize him or herself to observe and appreciate distinctions in a piece of music or in a painting, organisations can learn to observe and attend to variations they could not previously recognize. (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 436)

The value of organizational openness and sensitivity from a variety of inputs including employees and customers suggested "sophisticated horizontal and vertical exchanges – that is, exchanges that are richer and that allow for more variety than" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 436) simply coordinating the IMC process. Embracing the position of sophisticated observer encourages "widespread participation and information exchange about weaknesses as well as strengths" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 437) of the process (Weick & Sutcliff, 2001). Working towards an organizational culture driven by learning and effectiveness leverages the values and contributions of diverse cultures internally and externally (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 11). "When people believe that they must suggest and apply their ideas covertly, the organization also misses opportunities to discuss, debate, refine, and build on those ideas fully" (Ely & Thomas 1996, p. 11). This disengagement impacts work performance as well as collaboration and workplace relationships (Ely & Thomas, 1996, p. 11).

Basset-Jones (2005) defined the standard best practices of diversity management as "the aggregate effect of HRM [human resource management] sub-systems, including

recruitment, reward, performance appraisal, employee development and individual

managerial behaviors in delivering competitive advantage through leadership and team

work" (p. 170). Basset-Jones further described that highly committed organizations can

develop an advantage using human resource management strategies "to foster trust and

inclusiveness through effective leadership, on the one hand, with creativity and

innovation techniques that capitalize on diversity to deliver an innovation on the other"

(p. 174).

In her article titled "Ethnicity, Identity, and Marketing," Burton (2000) proposed a

conceptual framework to integrate ethnic identity and ethnicity into marketing theory and

practice in the United Kingdom. The components include (a) developing a greater

understanding of the ways in which ethnicity and ethnic identity could be conceptualized,

(b) operationalizing ethnicity to figure out the specific needs of ethnic minority

consumers, and (c) adopting the marketing and services mix to satisfy those needs

(Burton, 2000).

Star Model as a Framework for Exploration

To better focus on the IMC process specifically and as a way to design a

framework for exploring the components in the organization that can be affected by

creating a culturally inclusive process, the researcher chose to use Galbraith's (2001) star

model. The star model provides a diagnostic framework that can be implemented by

management to influence employee behavior and decision making (Galbraith, 2001). The

components are strategy, structure, process, people, and rewards (Galbraith, 2001). Each

will be discussed further as well as the implications for embedding cultural inclusion.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for embedding cultural inclusion. The drivers will vary by organizational culture, industry, and leadership style. The literature confirms, the structure is less important. Strategy, processes, rewards, and people will be the most important areas of focus to impact behavior and organizational culture. An alignment of all of the policies and processes is crucial to communicate a clear and consistent message throughout the company.

Strategy – direction. Creating and managing the strategic direction of brands across cultures is a driver to successful brand performance (Galbraith, 2001). Considering how branding and strategy play across different cultures, Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004) have developed a model to identify the impact of cross-cultural dilemmas in marketing strategy to provide a decision-making framework for prioritizing action and investment. Trompenaars and Wooliams are known for their seven dimensions model of culture, and present a marketing strategy for decision making when there are cultural dilemmas resulting from conflicting marketing perspective. An example is the universal versus particular dilemma in the classic global versus local marketing strategy dichotomy (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2004). The cross-cultural relationship marketing framework illuminates where the marketing challenges with customers may exist along their seven dimensions of culture and how to best decide on a course of action (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2004). The goal for organizations is to develop a mindset to reconcile and learn from each side of the dilemma and overcome these inevitable cultural dilemmas (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2004).

Jayne and Dipboye (2004) stated, "Tying the cultural inclusion process strategy to business results in a realistic way is the foundation of a successful diversity initiative"

(p. 417). Connecting the inclusion process to the organization's ability to compete "more effectively in the marketplace by understanding the demands of a diverse customer base" (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004, p. 417) with the unique business challenges facing the organization is the most effective strategy.

  Structure. Every business organization uses some form of marketing communications. The organizational structure used for marketing communications will depend on several factors. The size, variety, and number of products it markets, the role of advertising and promotion in the marketing mix, the size of the marketing and promotional budgets and the marketing structure are some of the factors to consider (Belch & Belch, 2011). In addition to the marketing department's direct responsibilities, top management is usually interested in how the advertising represents the organization (Belch & Belch, 2011). Some organizations have centralized marketing departments and advertising heads. How an organization can approach building a sustainable process of cultural inclusion will be different for every organization. Every workplace is unique and what works for some may not work for others.

  A shift to a culture of conscious inclusion, learning, and effectiveness results in an organizational culture with a relatively egalitarian, nonbureaucratic structure. A culture that promotes ideas and welcomes constructive challenges to the usual way of doing things would need to be incorporated into the structure (Ely & Thomas, 2001). The connection to business growth necessitates that every participant in the marketing process regardless of level and regardless of whether they are in the dominant or nondominant group, majority or minority, make the connection of business growth and sustainable inclusion in their day-to-day responsibilities (Tapia, 2009).

Process. In their study of work group diversity perspectives of three professional services firms, Ely and Thomas (2001) found the rationale of integration-and-learning, or "to inform and enhance core work and work process" (p. 247), resulted in a high resource for learning, change, and renewal and the connection between cultural diversity and work was direct and incorporated throughout the work (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Ely and Thomas (2001) noted, "The insights, skills, and experiences employees have developed as members of various cultural identity groups are potentially valuable resources that the work groups can use to rethink its primary tasks" (p. 240). They can also redefine "markets, products, strategies and business practices in ways that . . . advance its mission" (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 240). The indicators of progress from the study were an "increased representation of traditionally underrepresented groups that have the power to change the organization . . . [and] process and product innovation" (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 248); they also have a "shared sense that cultural diversity is a resource for learning" (p. 248). The other perspectives of access-and-legitimacy and discrimination-and-fairness did not have as high direct correlation (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Ely and Thomas (2001) found, "The perspective on cultural differenced required . . . a high value on process—on time spent exploring their different points of view and deliberating about whether and how they should inform the work" (p. 242).

Explorations of recommended processes to achieve brand equity and optimal emotional connections with target consumers are a starting point for discussing cultural inclusion as a sustainable initiative. The starting point in planning marketing communications is an audit of all the possible interactions that customer in the target

market may have with the company and all its products and services company (Belch &
Belch, 2011).

Leaders are advised to assess which experiences and impressions will have the
most influence for the organization at each stage in the process (Keller, 2009). This will
allow the appropriate allocation of communications dollars and design, and it will enable
the organization to implement the most effective communications programs (Keller,
2009)

People – skills and mindsets. Personnel selection is the single most important
human resource decision impacting the marketing process. To work together as a team,
employees must understand not only their jobs but also the values, norms, and ideologies
of the entire company and the marketing department subunits (Homan et al., 2008). A
high value is placed on collaboration and a team approach in the marketing process.
Team members are required to possess higher levels of openness to experiences (Homan
et al., 2008). Openness to cultural differences within the team structure is crucial. Teams
engaging in information elaboration will ensure that they are able to mobilize on the
diverse resources internally and externally. Clear information perspectives and ideas
generated from cultural inclusion can leverage the interactive effect of openness to
experience, leading to higher performing teams (Homan et al., 2008). The organizational
culture is taught to newcomers as the correct and valid way the organization functions;
this is also known as marketing socialization (Deshpand & Webster, 1989). The
recruitment and training process driven by the culture of the organization is a culture-
related activity. The "symbols attached to both formal and informal socialization"
(Deshpand & Webster, 1989, p. 12) can impact the hiring and training of diverse talent.

The socialization values, behaviors, and attitudes will vary with each organizational culture, even with directly competitive firms in the same industry.

The high value placed on innovation and creativity in the organizational culture can influence the candidate selection and cultural socialization process (Deshpand & Webster, 1989). CEOs who are concerned about a decline in creativity and innovation in the marketing management may place a higher priority than talent acquisition and development (Deshpand & Webster, 1989; Webster, 1992). Dr. Davidson (2011) suggested a framework in leveraging differences capability presents a process to see, understand, and engage differences as a way to shift from a human resources function to embedding into the organizational strategic process.

Domestic and global workforce trends. The growth of virtual work requires talent to be located in countries across the globe on virtual teams that will create work style and inclusion challenges. A collection of the top thought leaders and researchers on diversity gathered in 2006 at Kraft to discuss the implications of T. Friedman's (2007) book, *The World is Flat* (Tapia, 2009). Researchers agreed that the areas "requiring greater flexibility, creativity, and innovation are likely to experience the greatest benefits from a diverse workforce" (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004, p. 416). Additionally, organizations pursuing a growth strategy might benefit in increased productivity from a culturally diverse workforce (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

Global diversity. As organizations continue to depend on other countries for business growth the need for cultural skill development continues to become more pressing. It is not enough to export talent to other countries; it is now a vital investment

of resources to develop new competencies as part of an embedded process to ensure

global business success. The American Institute for Managing Diversity (2006) reported,

> A focus on global diversity is key to aligning diversity with a global business model. There is a need for a business case that reflects and responds to the realities of a flat world. In addition, new competencies for employees, manager and leaders must be developed. (p. 8)

The same report discussed the need for cross-cultural skills and noted,

> All members of an organization must have the ability to function at a high level across cultural paradigms. Such skills are as relevant to the employee whose work appears to be localized as the one whose work is superficially broader in scope. (American Institute for Managing Diversity, 2006, p. 8)

Competency and skill development. The marketing process engages in domestic

and global, internal ands external, cross-functional teams and groups (Belch & Belch,

2011). Leveraging differences and conscious inclusion will require building

competencies for successful teams. While the potential is great, the risk of

misunderstandings, mistrust, and miscommunications among team members and

increased stereotyping is high (Adler, 2008), which may make it more difficult to gain

consensus and reach decisions. Maximizing the characteristics of a successful team

requires clear goals and objectives that are accepted by all the members; rules, role

definitions, and clear procedures, active participation of each team member; and clear

discipline and consequences, clear communication channels (Katzenbach & Smith,

2005). The challenges of cultural inclusion within teams include overcoming differences

in language and culture, developing trust and relationships, and developing a common

context for decision making (Thomas & Ely, 1996). The most successful organizations

are those cultures that value and stimulate personal development (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

The organizational cultures that are able to bring out the full range of useful knowledge

and skills through the design of jobs and training and education will be the most

successful in creating an inclusive environment (Thomas, & Ely, 1996).

Intercultural competency is a challenge of sustaining cultural inclusion in an

organization. Bennett and Bennett (2001) described intercultural competency as "the

ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately

in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 6). This competency

> is usually a primary goal in diversity initiatives in organizations, where it is
> assumed to contribute to effective marketing across cultures in addition to
> recruitment and retention of members of underrepresented groups, management of
> a diverse workforce, productivity of multicultural teams, and to the development
> of a climate of respect for diversity in the organization. (Bennett & Bennett, 2001,
> p. 6)

In order for intercultural development to occur knowledge, attitude, and behavior must

work together (Bennett & Bennett, 2001).

Bennett and Bennett (2001) created a model for individuals, teams, and groups to

use to experience intercultural competence as a skill. The developmental model of

intercultural sensitivity was created as a framework to understand individual and

organizational observed and reported behavior: "The underlying assumption of the model

is that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, one's

competence in intercultural relations increases" (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, p. 13). This

framework is divided into six different stages; the first three are ethnocentric stages and

"can be seen as ways of avoiding cultural difference, either by denying its existence, by

raising defenses against it, or by minimizing its importance" (Bennett & Bennett, 2001,

p. 14). Further up the spectrum to intercultural competence are the three ethnorelative

stages, which "are ways of seeking cultural difference, either by accepting its importance,

by adapting a perspective to take it into account, or by integrating the whole concept into

a definition of identity" (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, pp. 14–15). Bennett and Bennett

(2001) described the organizational view in a culturally inclusive environment as those in

the adaptation stage. Organizations characterized by adaptation

> encourage educational training for executives and managers in both mindset and skill set of intercultural competence. Typically, upper-level executives take a leading role in supporting intercultural development in the organization. A strong climate of respect for diversity leads to high retention of diversity in the workforce. Both domestic and international cultural differences are routinely used as resources in multicultural teams. (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, p. 23)

C. M. Solomon and Schell (2009) recommended the following steps for cultural

inclusion working across cultures globally:

1. Discuss the impact of culture with all team members.

2. Solicit feedback from all team members—written and oral.

3. Give nonnative English speakers adequate time to express their ideas.

4. Avoid slang.

5. Check often for understanding.

6. Confirm and double-check schedule and time agreements.

7. Define a process for decision making.

8. Determine a process for disagreement and debate.

9. Review important decisions in writing and solicit confirmation.

10. Help each other understand and avoid potential cultural misunderstandings.

Organizational cultural considerations. The organizations most poised to

leverage cultural inclusion have leadership that truly value variety of opinion and insight

(Ely & Thomas, 2001). The cultures best prepared for sustainably embedding cultural

inclusion possess a culture that instills a high tolerance for debate (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

A culture that supports constructive conflict on work-related matters and a culture that

helps workers to feel valued and fosters empowered and committed teams (Ely &
Thomas, 2001).

    Inclusive leadership: Internal champions and diverse stakeholders. Thomas and
Ely (1996) asserted, "Leadership must recognize both the learning opportunities and the
challenges that the expression of different perspectives presents for an organization and
has a sense of commitment to persevering during the learning and relearning process" (p.
8). Management will need to understand that the learning-and-effectiveness shift in
cultural inclusion can result in greater temporary vulnerability and may require extra
steps to create a "safe" (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 12) place. Leaders must consistently
demonstrate commitment by resolving any tensions and conflicts sensitively and swiftly
(Ely & Thomas, 1996).

    Rewards and feedback loop. Implementing a cultural inclusion process across
brand teams both internally and externally will take time, effort, and commitment (Jayne
& Dipboye, 2004). "Establishing metrics and evaluating the effectiveness of diversity
initiatives will allow organizations to make data-driven decisions about how to leverage
resources most effectively" (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004, p. 420). The "metrics [will] allow
the organization to track progress and identify and address issues as they emerge" (Jayne
& Dipboye, 2004, p. 419). Team-, subgroup-, or project-based reward systems are
important tools for influencing inclusion effectiveness as well as the potential to
influence the salience of intragroup cultural differences (Homan et al., 2008). In an
integrated communications process, rewards can be implemented both internally in an
organization as well as across organizations on projects with external partners and
vendors or specific to brands (Belch & Belch, 2011).

Evaluation process. Agency evaluations are often done on an informal basis in small companies. In large firms and the top consumer brands some companies have developed a formal, systematic evaluation system to ensure that money is being spent efficiently and effectively (Belch & Belch, 2011). As budgets rise, more companies are adopting formal procedures for evaluating the performance of their agencies (Belch & Belch, 2011). Ambwani et al. (2011) suggested additional steps in the agency selection process to embed cultural inclusion in the process for target fit, such as language competency, cultural experience, involvement with the target group, and access to the target research when there is a significant percent of cultural difference in the target group.

Summary

The domestic and global trends signal a significant growth in culturally diverse populations. Increased competition requires differentiation and more effective marketing to appeal to these consumer groups and respond to demands for growth. The IMC process is used as the primary components to explore embedding cultural inclusion used by most consumer marketers. The latest trends and leading practices for creating inclusive organizations explore the communication, talent management, and conscious action needed by leaders and organizational policies to build engagement by diverse employees, as well as internal and external stakeholders. Recommendations from thought leaders in cultural competency building and inclusive culture development offer leading practices. Using Galbraith's (2001) star model as a diagnostic framework to study gaps and successes of some of the largest brand marketers, this thesis focused on the organizational structural and process-oriented barriers in the IMC process that might be present that

prevent brands from optimizing and fully benefiting from sustainable and embedded cultural inclusion.

The next chapter will discuss the design of the research study. Chapter 3 also presents the methods used to collect the data to explore organizational performance in comparison to the optimal recommendations offered in the literature reviewed.

Chapter 3

Methods

This chapter describes the research methods used in the study. The primary

research question was: How are consumer brand organizations building capabilities and

organizing to embed cultural inclusion and insights throughout the marketing

communications process? The following subquestions were also explored:

1. What components and framework support embedding cultural inclusion for

   sustainable results?

2. Where in the organizational design and process are there needs or barriers to

   cultural inclusion?

3. What gaps between current and desired states if any, exist in the structures,

   processes, or talent management?

Extensive research exists on multicultural marketing, diversity, and inclusion in

organizations, with less research found on the organizational development implications.

The trend in the marketing industry toward cultural insight integration inclusive of a total

market and high growth domestic and international markets suggests a need for a deeper

exploration across organizations and industries to uncover any common patterns or

themes attributable to brand success or barriers to performance.

Research Design

An exploratory research design was selected for this study on how consumer

brand organizations sustainably embed cultural inclusion throughout the marketing

communications process for business performance. A mixed-methods design of online

survey and telephone interviews were used. All of the data were self-reported by

participants closest to the process under study. An online survey was used, as Tashakkori and Teddie (1998) noted surveys could be used to address questions that hypothesize relationships among variables that are measured frequently in numerical and objective ways. A qualitative interview was selected to follow the online survey to address questions of meaning, interpretation, and context.

Research Instrument – Survey

The online survey collected data on the profiles of participants, participants' roles in their organizations, and the profiles of the organizations. The survey also measured the current cultural inclusion experiences and drivers of change. The level of current satisfaction and planned change of those same experiences and drivers of change were also measured. The categories in the survey were (a) demographic and organizational profile; (b) cultural inclusion defined in the organization; and (c) level of importance, satisfaction, and planned change in approach and investment in the organization. In total 11 questions asked of the survey participants (Appendix A).

Interviews

In total, 15 one-hour interviews were conducted; interviewees were drawn from the pool of completed online surveys. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit greater context, individual perspectives, and gain a much deeper understanding of the dynamics within the organization as well as any barriers and recommendations for improvement in the process. Direct dialogue was required to discover the relationship between organizational development and marketing and how they are interrelated. The semistructured approach was used to provide some consistency of data for the purposes of analysis and some flexibility to allow for greater depth of discussion. The

semistructured design method also allowed for clarification given the different roles, organizational structures, and business needs. Probing, follow-up questions, and the development of recommendations from participants could also be incorporated into the interviews. The topical focus area was the respondent's descriptions of the current organization, perceptions of success, challenges, and development.

Sampling Methodology

This section describes the study sample. First, the sample source is detailed. Next, the sample unit criteria are discussed. The section closes with a discussion of the timing and setting for the study.

Sample source. Tangerine Watson, Inc. provided the pool from which participants were identified. A convenience sample of a current database and network of industry professionals was selected from the researcher's professional network and database. The sample participants were referred or snowballed from an initial executive contact who was asked to refer a participant able to provide detailed and accurate data within the marketing department, diversity and inclusion department, or advertising agency. The sample population was the most appropriate brand-marketing or IMC executive responsible for the identified brands, or the diversity and inclusion executive.

The survey spanned a period of 3 months to ensure response and participation. The respondents included middle- to senior-level marketing, agency, or organizational development executives. Depending on the structure of the company, the participants held the titles of marketing director or brand manager. The participant was the most senior person in the marketing department. The IMC partners (advertising agency, promotional agency, research firm) also have access and knowledge about the IMC

process and represented the brand as an additional data source. Secondarily, the organizational development or diversity and inclusion executive working closely with the marketing department qualified as a survey participant able to respond to the survey questions. Trade association relationships were also leveraged to identify and generate support for the research in exchange for executive summary highlights from the thesis presented at participant organizations.

The ideal size of the population target for the online survey was 50, and the final survey response was 20. There were 18 marketing participants and two human resource related participants. The ideal interview size was a sample of 10–15 from the survey participants. The final interview size was 15 participants.

Sample unit criteria. The participant pool was comprised of marketing executives at organizations that fit the following criteria:

- Organizations specializing in retail, financial, consumer packaged goods, food, beverages and spirits, automotive, airlines, technology, travel, tourism, hospitality, healthcare, cosmetics and toiletries, telecommunications, apparel, and restaurants.

- Organizations possessed one or both of the following investment in resources in targeted marketing: (a) marketing communications with a cross-cultural insight or targeting a culture or sub-culture focus, and/op (b) an Executive from within the diversity and inclusion or organizational development functions may also qualify as a participant qualified as working most closely with the marketing department.

Timing and setting. The initial contact was an email introduction distribution to

the selected respondents with a link to the survey inviting them to participate (Appendix

B). Weekly reminder emails were sent out to ensure maximum response. Those

completing the survey were requested to schedule a follow-up telephone or face-to-face

45-minute interview with the goal of one third of online survey participants being

interviewed.

A continuous comparative process determined the total sample of interviews

necessary for complete analysis. Each participant was sent an interview guide prior to the

interview, serving as an additional consent form (Appendix C) by email prior to the

interview and an offer to receive the highlights of the aggregated survey results.

Data Analysis Plan

The survey data consisted of an 11-item survey designed and coded to categorize

similar industries, processes, and structures to group the findings and uncover themes.

The survey gathered organizational and role information, including the scope of the

organization, industry focus, and role scope of responsibility of the participant. As

exploratory research, the sample was a nonprobability sample; as such, the researcher

was unable to measure the probability of sampling error. The focus of the analysis was to

establish any patterns in strategy, structure, process, reward, people skill, job design, and

development. The researcher summarized themes for the entire population from the

transcribed interviews that emerged by component and categorized by the components in

Galbraith's (2001) star model as a framework for analysis.

The focus was to identify the role of cultural insight integration. Prior to

beginning the data analysis, contextual quotes were included to be used to provide

additional depth and perspectives. The first level of analysis was to determine the

perception of cultural inclusion in the marketing process, identify the areas where it

predominates as well as the areas where it is not prevalent. The second level of analysis

determined what resources and tools were most effective in the organization for

embedding cultural inclusion throughout the process. Additionally, the analysis

uncovered any perspectives, themes, and context in the interviews adding to the body of

research.

Summary

This chapter presented the methods and design used by the researcher. It restated

the research purpose, described the rationale for the approach, and provided a discussion

of the data collection tools, scope of the sample units, and the data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter reports the research findings and analysis of the study. The purpose

of this study was to explore how consumer brand organizations sustainably embed

cultural inclusion throughout the marketing communications process for business

performance. What follows are detailed findings from the research followed by

participant recommendations and a summary of the findings. The research surveyed

select executives representing large organizations in both an online survey and follow-up

1-hour telephone interviews. In total 20 participants responded to the online survey and

15 telephone interviews were completed. The executives interviewed shared detailed

organizational data representing companies generating approximately $413 billion in

gross revenue in 2013.

Survey Findings

The survey findings are presented in the following five themes: (a) study

participant and organizational profile, (b) geographic scope of role, (c) organizations'

primary industry sector, (d) defining culture in organizations and their marketing process,

and (e) rating the effective and anticipated changes in cultural inclusion. Each of these

themes is explored in turn.

Study participant and organizational profile. The participants were at senior

levels in the organizations (see Table 2) with responsibility leading the marketing

department, leading a unit of business, or managing diversity and inclusion or holding the

responsibilities of an agency executive.

Table 2
Job Level: Role in the Organization

Job Level	# Responses	% Total
C-Level Executive	1	5
Executive or Senior Vice President	6	30
Vice President	6	30
Director	5	25
Manager	1	5
Individual Contributor	1	5

Note. N = 20.

Geographic scope of role. The participants are primarily responsible for the

domestic US geographical area. A large percentage of participants have global

responsibilities (see Table 3).

Table 3
Geographic Scope of Role

Geographic Region	# Responses	% Total
Domestic, United States Only	14	70
Domestic and International Regions (Caribbean & Latin America)	2	10
Global	4	20

Note. N = 20.

Organizations' primary industry sector. Participants' business sectors cross a

broad array of industries all focused on marketing directly to the end consumers (see

Table 4). There is a slightly higher participation in the retail and consumer packages

goods verticals.

The majority of the participants were responsible for all components of the marketing process, 90% (18 participants). The remaining participants are responsible for diversity and inclusion in their organization 10% (two participants). The participants were divided on how well cultural inclusion is meeting expectations, with 55% (11 participants) agreeing that it meets expectations, 35% (seven participants) indicating that it was short of expectations, and 10% (two participants) reporting that it exceeds their expectations.

Table 4
Organizations' Primary Industry Sector

Industry	# Responses	% Total
Consumer Packaged Goods	4	20
Financial, Insurance, and Credit Cards	3	15
Food and Beverage	2	10
Retail	4	20
Spirits and Beer	1	5
Technology and Telecommunications	2	10
Travel, Hospitality, and Entertainment	2	10
Pharmaceuticals and Health Care	1	5
Advertising Agency	1	5

Note. N = 20.

Defining culture in organizations and their marketing process. There was a wide range of responses to how the concept of cultural inclusion is referred to in the participants' marketing processes (see Table 5). The majority of the participants referred to cultural inclusion as total marketing strategy or total market approach. The participants

rated the importance of cultural inclusion throughout the marketing process as extremely important, 65% (13 participants) in the organizations. The remaining 35% (seven participants) used a mix of other commonly referred to terms such as multicultural, cross-cultural, target marketing, or did not use any commonly referred terms at all.

Table 5
Cultural Inclusion Reference

Cultural Inclusion is referred to as . . .	# Responses	% Total
Total Marketing Strategy or Approach	6	30
Multicultural Marketing	4	20
Cultural Insights and Intelligence	4	20
Cross-cultural marketing	2	10
Other (all of the above, embedded in our DNA)	2	10
Ethnic Marketing	1	5
Not referred to at all	1	5

Note. N = 20.

Rating the effective and anticipated changes in cultural inclusion. The participants were asked to rate the current effectiveness of cultural inclusion in the organization. The areas of focus where the participant's organization anticipated change in the next year were also noted (see Table 6). None of the respondents anticipated less of a focus in any area; all of the respondents responded with no change, taking it slow, and testing or an increased focus.

Table 6

Anticipated Changes and Effectiveness of Cultural Inclusion

Areas of Focus	Effectiveness Rating Average Value*	Anticipated Change: Increased Focus in the Next Year
Brand or Marketing Strategy	3.84	13
Business Strategy	-	12
Diverse Talent Acquisition or Retention	3.63	11
Business or Performance Goals	-	9
Marketing Process	3.37	9
Organizational Culture	3.68	9
Cultural Inclusion Training and Skill Development	3.44	9
Company Values	3.79	8
Leadership or Champion	3.53	7
Organizational Design	–	6
Organizational or Departmental Structure	2.89	5
Job Responsibility	3.22	4
Rewards and Incentives	2.84	3

Note. *Min = 1, Max = 5.

Interview Data Themes

There were five themes that emerged from the interview data with additional subthemes included. The themes discussed are components consistently mentioned by participants for organizations to consider for embedding cultural inclusion throughout the marketing process. The themes are as follows: (a) data capturing, integration, and reporting; (b) the importance of data measurement tools, (c) strategic alignment;

(d) strong leadership commitment; (e) talent – a shift in hiring needs; (f) talent – the need for cultural competency skill development; and (g) process recalibration.

The overarching themes are connected and interwoven into every aspect of the cultural inclusion transformation process for the organizations surveyed. Data capturing, integration, and reporting are weaved throughout the process. The strategic alignment integrates the external and internal data triggers, influencing the overarching business strategy, as well as the marketing and brand strategies. In participants' experience, the strategic alignment of each component determined the success or possible barriers to the process. The skills and competencies experienced in leadership needed to embed the process and execute the strategic alignment is the next theme emerging from the data. The talent required and the development of that talent creates new and specialized skills and competencies. Finally, the IMC process recalibrated at every stage and in every part of the organization for effective transformation was the theme that participants invested the most time confronting.

Data capturing, integration, and reporting. The majority of the participants interviewed, 80% (12 participants), described their organizations' initial foray into the cultural inclusion transformation process as occurring fairly recently (< 5 years). There are significant factors that have been primary triggers for increased emphasis, additional resources, and organizational focus (see Table 7). The internal triggers forcing change were primarily new roles and responsibilities for those in leadership magnifying a need for realignment and transformation process. The significant shifts in demographic in the US, as demonstrated in the 2010 census numbers (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011), created a jolt in some participant organizations. Retail customers, internal sales or

marketing group data analysis, and agency or outside inputs like social media feedback drove the data trigger. The data points triggered the initial organizational action and extend to the final business performance measurements of success.

Table 7

Data Capturing and Reporting Factors

Contributing Factors	Explanation
Census data	Population shifts and growth across the United States.
Business growth needs	Identifying the key drivers of business growth.
Shift from anecdotal conversations and philosophies to showing real data.	Taking a step away from anecdotal to using trackers, primary and secondary research to support the case.
Consumption trends	Scale the business up for quick growth or if the product form would work or not work.
Consumer research, not just for marketing but product development from initial plan to delivery	Front-end research – product, idea concept.
Research at the start is representative of cultural groups	Make sure we have a representative sample of cultural insights.
Identify groups or communities growing at a faster pace than average.	Investigate population movements. The process of acting on the data and incorporating the missing findings.
Retail customers have more data and closer to the customer.	Retail sales growth showing growth trends. Store performance and sales data.
Sales force intelligence data	Sales team share local market initiatives and competitive activity.
Competitive intelligence	Competitive activity by category. Defending category share and position.

Contributing Factors	Explanation
Shifts in cultural identity and mindset. Expanding the definition of culture	Uncover cultural and trends how people go about their lives, that relates to culture – insider and outsider culture.
Uncovering the next two or three levels down to uncover the insights	Determining small nuances vs. gigantic differences.
The highest level of segmentation. Either to innovate or how to build communities around certain brands and launches	Digging into those need states see a separation between general market and multicultural market.
BRG/ERGs– valuable in initial research construction – cultural nuances and insights	Identifying high-level nuances the brand team maybe missing.
Driving behavior, not just sales, in growth targets	Better quantification of not just effort but of impact.
Measure against the activity to make people accountable and greater metrics for feedback	There is a drive to figure it out but it is not working well, not a methodical process.
Measuring the pre and post in markets to determine if we are getting the sales and whether it was worth it	Identifying the impact of a targeted initiative and any shifts in the business.
Budget allocation and return on investment is a barrier to success	The pressure for efficiency and effectiveness. Takes more from the budget. A disconnect between it being a priority and it being acted upon.
Scale and complexity is a barrier	Takes much more work to uncover and measure the value of the nuances and implementation of the opportunity.
Accountability and reporting results can be a barrier	Individual, group, and organizational measurable results and accountability.

Note. BRG = Business Resource Group; ERG = Employee Resource Group.

Participants who observed a shift explained the trigger propelling the change as the data analysis, proving a case for investing in business growth. The marketing

executives attributed the attention and shift by the organization to the externally focused perspective in the marketing department versus other areas in the organization.

Some of the participants saw business decline, such as the fan base or brand retail sales decline, which triggered an investment in external resources to determine the cause. The research the organizations completed suggested greater investment and significant changes to their cultural inclusion marketing processes and ecosystem.

The measurement of results was crucial to all participants surveyed. When asked how their organization measures the results of cultural inclusion investment throughout the process, a significant number of respondents reported not measuring results, 26% (five participants); the majority used brand share, 63% (12 participants); many used a unit of measurement with custom metrics, 53% (10 participants); and employee surveys were also used, 47% (nine participants).

When asked to elaborate on the importance data plays in the organization, there interviewees agreed that having the right facts are pivotal to making the case across the business for investing cultural inclusion initiatives. One participant articulated,

> Inclusion is important in our world, but it has to be important to the business. It is tying it to the business gains and losses. You have to ask the questions. What is the detrimental effect if we don't do it? You have got to have the facts. (Interviewee)

A participant provided an example of a solution to the lack of measurement data or measurement process as a potential barrier expressed to cultural inclusion by some of the participants.

> There is no reason that you can't measure the success of the work. It should be fully integrated into the process. If you are doing 360 planning and holding people accountable, there is no excuse anymore. If I can't figure out how to get a concrete measure, then I have to be more creative. (Interviewee)

A participant provided an example of how he or she incorporates cultural inclusion

accountability into the business performance in his division.

> I have tasked several people over time and forced them to put a specific number
> in their objectives in terms of how much they are going to grow their multicultural
> bases. The quantification can look different. It can be a penetration metric or a
> share metric, could be both. But something that is measurable so that when we set
> their objective we can make a determination of whether we hit or not over some
> relevant time period. In a classic brand management structure where you are
> responsible for the marketing and hitting financial numbers as well, I do think you
> have to hold people accountable through some type of measurable objective.
> Absent that you are not going to drive behavior across the board. You will only
> drive behavior in certain isolated instances. (Interviewee)

The importance of data measurement tools. The organizations all utilized a

systems feedback loop to measure the output of embedding cultural inclusion for brand

performance. The participants all used or planned to embed measurement tools to gather

cultural insights, track consumer data, and plan the effectiveness of marketing

interventions and processes (see Table 8).

All of the interviewees agreed on the importance of measurement tools and data

not only to measure performance but also to prioritize resource investments and build

enterprise support for cultural inclusion for brand performance. The use of tools was deep

and broad. A few of the participants expressed a need for new or reformulated tools and

resources from current vendors to support culturally accurate collection and reporting of

data.

A participant shared a solution to the challenge of measurement tools and the

integration of data in the process:

> [We need] to create a measurement and evaluation tool and infrastructure to
> measure how well the cultural inclusion process is working. It is not just, are we
> getting that cultural target, it is, are we spending more or less for the low or high
> hanging fruit with a higher return on investment. (Interviewee)

Table 8

Interviewee Data Measurement Tool Considerations

Considerations	# Responses	% Total
Should be integrated throughout the process	14	93
Disappointment in the tools available	3	20
Crucial for strategic planning	14	93
External research vendors not up to requirements needed for the brands	3	20

Note. N = 15.

Participants expressed the need for accurate measurement and a refined research

process. Interviewees indicated that external research firm stakeholders play a crucial role

in the process. When asked about the satisfaction with external research partners, one

participant shared frustration and provided an example of where there are challenges:

> The research industry is still in a dismal place. The big research companies do not
> understand it or don't have the right people in place; for example, I poked holes in
> one and they don't have the answers. The panel data firm only has English
> speakers, making the data flawed. I have to make huge decisions based on the
> data. The research industry is still not where it should be. (Interviewee)

Strategic alignment. There was agreement among the participants that

embedding cultural inclusion throughout the marketing process takes commitment, is a

huge undertaking, and happens over the course of time (see Table 9). What was and still

is required from the organization to move through the process varies given the leadership

support, engagement, infrastructure, and organizational culture. Participants experiencing

success attributed those achievements to moving from just a marketing strategy to an

entire enterprise strategy. Those participants describing a lack of alignment in their

organization described spotty areas, inconsistencies, and fits and starts in achieving

organizational goals and performance. While most of the participants agreed that their

organizations are fairly new to embedding cultural inclusion alignment in strategy, the

participants agreed alignment with the overall business strategy and model was an

important variable.

Table 9
Strategic Alignment Considerations

Considerations	Explanation
Growth strategy.	Finding new pockets of growth is a strategic driver.
Balancing scale and deep connections.	The growth strategy and cultural authenticity requires balance.
Shift in brand focus required.	The strategic focus on specific brands in the portfolio.
Culture shaping the engagement.	How the brand or service engages with culture.
Need for more structure and rigor.	Increase the strategic process and accountability and guiding principles.
Prioritize investment levels based on the biggest hooks.	Brand partners and external partners create the "how."
Part of overarching organizational culture.	Whether cultural inclusion is tacked on or how people do business.
Leaving money on the table.	Brand is not doing well, or is losing sales compared to the category performance.
Core foundation of long-term organizational strategic commitment.	Legitimize around a concept that has an impact on every area of the organization.
Prioritizing the resources.	Requires more resources and a huge undertaking.
Corporate goals to increase competitive share.	Organizational goals across the enterprise.
Thinking and structure rolls up through marketing.	Align strategy across the marketing functions and levels.

Considerations	Explanation
Politically correct versus authentic approach to doing business.	Company culture signals that inclusion is part of their life. Marketing type of inclusiveness that is genuine.
Total market is defined as an umbrella	Strategic approach to the business.
Whole go-to-market process across the enterprise.	Not just advertising process but job responsibilities and structure, enterprise wide.
Connected to diversity and inclusion initiatives.	Participate and request support as part of the strategy.
Connecting back to strategy and business model.	Not part of the overall business strategy or business model. Focus on the activation instead of connecting to the business strategy or opportunity.
Move from a multicultural goal to a business-driving goal.	Nudge the base business to a more cross-cultural place. Compete for fair share of entrants into the category rather than new entrants into the category.
Goal is to tell more diverse stories and be more inclusive.	Create consumer activation that reflects the community.
Customer acquisition efforts is a business mandate.	A strategy to acquire more customers drives a broader cultural approach.
Lead and win with "x" brands and category leadership in "x" markets.	Brands with the highest equity with multicultural consumers.
Active inclusion with multicultural consumers throughout the marketing process.	Identify a new goal.
Multicultural includes Caucasian.	Strategic approach to total market rather than multicultural.
Shift from general market and Hispanic. Growth in multicultural society to allow capturing the market efficiently with total cost, cross cultural, subcultural, and executions.	Shift in strategy with a broader view of the cultural markets missing and the cost of additional communications executions.

Considerations	Explanation
Organizational culture and business approach alignment lead to success.	Making it a core part of the business and a consistent part of the organization as the only way to build the business and differentiate.
Success turning around a brand from decline to growth by incorporating a fully integrated approach to cultural inclusion throughout the process.	A total market opportunity that effectively demonstrated a total market approach.

The participants discussed the challenges in the current process in sharing cultural inclusion intelligence across departments. A participant shared an example of parallel conversations across departments that can influence cultural inclusion that are not currently aligned to capture data and nuances:

> We were having parallel conversations in sales and in the marketing groups about how to get at these multicultural consumers and how to get more Hispanic consumers. At the same time, we have competitor XYZ killing us. If you have parallel conversations, it does not take a genius to figure out you better do something about that. (Interviewee)

Strong leadership commitment. The purposeful changes to the process came early in the roles of senior-level participants who were tasked with embedding cultural inclusion. Leadership shifts in skills emerged early in the transformation to a total market approach process (see Table 10). The changes described by participants included integrating the process with traditional and multicultural agencies, changing the creative process, and changes to how they approached the total market with cultural insights. The interviewees experiencing the most success attributed that success to their personal commitment and organizational leadership, moving the companies forward to greater cultural inclusion.

Table 10
Leadership Considerations

Considerations	Explanation
CEO gets it and leads own initiatives.	Visionary leadership, his/her own personal mission.
Senior leadership should incorporate into the organization's core goals.	Acknowledge the value and importance by senior levels. Get everyone's attention.
Engage the most senior leadership with compelling data.	Facts, population, and sales data to shed new light and change perceptions to get to the champion – the CEO or head of the business.
Requires a champion at the highest level.	Requires a brand marketer to drive the integration of the network and stakeholders. Can't just give it lip service, even if everyone does not agree.
Responsiveness.	Acknowledge customer demand and activate.
Senior leadership acknowledgement of the value and engagement.	Awareness of needs and willingness to act across the business.
Challenge the status quo.	Asking ourselves why we are doing this. Is it driving business or is it expected based on our target.
Priority.	Prioritize and manage spotty areas and occasions. First thing tackled in a new role.
Passion and personally invested.	Personally invested and passionate about finding value in a target that is different from themselves.
Patience and flexibility.	Consciousness of the tension and new expectations of internal and external stakeholders.
Clear and clean communications.	Asking people to do things differently from how they currently work requires increased clarity.
Institutional commitment.	Tied to business objectives, consistently, and long term. Lack of alignment with the priorities and lack of a broad appreciation for the targets can be barriers.
Establish trust.	Longevity, reputation, long-term view.

Considerations	Explanation
Consistency.	Across brands, departments, and direct reports messaging.
Lead the external partner change process.	The integration of traditional and multicultural agency and creative process is led by the leadership.
Not easy to collaborate with a legacy of power between multicultural and traditional agencies.	The fight for power for space and ideas and a concern for losing ground.

When asked what leadership skills made the difference in embedding cultural inclusion in the organization, one participant shared a self-assessment of his or her own leadership style:

> I put myself out there before it was fashionable to do it. I put some stakes in the ground. You have to be pretty passionate. The motivation was the business opportunity. (Interviewee)

Another participant offered a suggestion of what senior leadership can institute to drive cultural inclusion change in an organization.

> Funding should be held back and taken from the brands at the onset and planning phase. As the brands/units create campaigns, they should have to hit certain hurdles of reaching cultural markets before they get more funding. For example, if the brands are able to create an inclusive campaign that hits the cultural insight. So, if they have $10 million, they would only get $5 million until they hit the agreed-upon threshold. If they don't do it, they would only get to spend $5 million. It becomes the job of the person holding the checkbook to create the right threshold for that money to be released, and that takes a lot of work. (Interviewee)

> Interviewees were asked what they needed from senior leadership to drive change.

They agreed that the value and importance of senior-level engagement and communication is vital to sustainable cultural inclusion.

> There should be an acknowledgement of the value and importance by the most senior levels of the organization. Cultural competency should be a core competency for everyone at the organization with decision-making power to move the organization into the future. (Interviewee)

Talent – a shift in hiring needs. Nearly all of the interviewees, 87% (13 participants), expressed challenges in cultural inclusion in the talent recruitment area. The use of diversity talent acquisition and retention development tools were used and considered ineffective by 35% (seven participants) of the survey respondents. The data showed not only a challenge in general, but the skills and experiences for embedding cultural inclusion throughout the process made finding and keeping the right talent an even greater barrier for the participating organizations.

There was agreement from the interviewees in the need for specifically skilled talent for embedding cultural inclusion. Participants expressed a need for consistent commitment and prioritization of human resource and talent management to produce the anticipated output.

The participants who felt successful in creating a culturally inclusive team were at chief marketing officer level roles or similar levels with senior-level commitment. These participants have made recruitment of diverse talent a priority and shared similar perspectives on the value to the business.

Determining how best to recruit and retain more diverse talent was a common theme heard from the participants interviewed. Establishing a plan, securing senior-level engagement, and finding successful outcomes based on the current approach were some of the challenges expressed (see Table 11).

The interviewees 40% (six participants) agreed that the skills, capabilities, and experiences needed by the talent hired has shifted and become hard to find, particularly at the higher levels of management. When asked what roles and responsibilities are required from talent now and moving forward, most of the interviewees, 46% (seven participants),

hired cultural inclusion experts with specific responsibility for cultural understandings

and embedded those insights into the marketing process.

Table 11
Talent Hiring Needs

Factors	Explanation
The necessary skills and experiences have shifted and are hard to find.	Skills have shifted, particularly at the higher levels of management. Also difficult if the organization does not have a culturally inclusive reputation.
Make hiring diverse talent a priority.	Having a diverse team is the best way to grow the business and bring diverse ideas.
Need more diverse recruitment initiatives.	The diversity and inclusion departments are needed for this.
How to recruit and retain is a frustration.	Unable to find and retain the talent with the right skills and experiences.
A plan, resource allocation, senior-level engagement, successful outcomes.	Need a commitment and engagement in talent acquisition.
Must understand cultural nuances.	New skills and competency needed.
A barrier to success is breaking from the norms and traditional roles.	Getting people to break out of their traditional roles and norms.
There is only one person with the right skills responsible for cultural inclusion.	Not sustainable across the organization.
Started with insights by hiring an insights manager.	Hired the right talent to focus on cultural insights for the business transformation.
Frustrated with the lack of diversity at external agency partners.	The creative, strategy, and insights areas were noted most often.
The cultural insights discipline at external partners need a more diverse team.	It starts with the team, and the team is not diverse. The agency did not understand what a diverse team meant.

Factors	Explanation
Geographically targeted locations necessary to tap into cultural availability in those areas.	Create hiring locations where cultural diverse employees are located.
Training and internship programs for young talent.	Needed more for geographically challenged locations.
Ask for "hand-raisers" for consortium projects.	Identifying people with a personal passion for working on cultural inclusion projects.
Hiring external agency search requirements has changed.	Added a criteria asking for diversity and cross-cultural examples in their insights, their work, their strategy, and their team.

Participants were probed to uncover why building a team has been important to their organization's business success. One participant described the value cultural inclusion has had on her team's performance and what she looks for in talent:

> I am positive I have the most diverse organization from a function standpoint. If I am going to be able to deliver to different consumer needs, I need to have a perspective different from my own. Having a diverse team is the best way to grow the business and bring diverse ideas. It allows us to be able to bring not just the appreciation for similarities but also the differences and cultural nuances, and how to do it in a way that is respectful and not stereotypical. (Interviewee)

The barriers to building a diverse team related to finding talent. A participant described the recruitment process in the organization and the unintended consequences of the talent acquisition process:

> The CMO [chief marketing officer] says there is one practical reason for the low diversity in marketing. The recruits come from only 5-6 MBA [Masters in Business Administration] schools. The graduating class of multicultural talent is very small. (Interviewee)

The participants agreed the talent acquisition process is an evolution for their organizations. One participant shared how her organization is evolving and beginning to value a different cultural perspective in the marketing process:

> Diversity has improved. It is still not all the way there. I am the only female executive of color at the brand. I can provide advice on cultural insight based on things that I think are appropriate, respectful in pushing the envelope. There is now a higher level of sensitivity. As the only person of color in the room my role is around cultural nuance. They are coming to me to do a "check." (Interviewee)

Participants described a different skill set, approach, and method to leveraging culturally diverse talent and the unintended consequence for using diverse talent ineffectively.

> You don't bring in the multicultural person to tweak your campaign. You bring the multicultural expertise upfront to evolve your campaign at the core. It takes a different type of creative and brand type. (Interviewee)

> It will take a lot stronger marketer and a better marketer than it did in the past. In order to understand that the market has changed from black and white to the 64 colors in the Crayola box; you have to understand a lot more about the consumer types and consumer groups. (Interviewee)

Talent – the need for cultural competency skill development. The participants were asked about the overall training and competency development organizations used to build cultural inclusion skills. The responses were mixed, with little consistency in approach or need (see Table 12). The majority of interviewees, 53% (eight participants), have formal training that is basic and integrated into leadership and new employee training initiatives at their organization.

The participants expressed a need for a higher level of training, "digging deeper" in the development. Nearly 55% (11 participants) of the survey respondents were not using cultural competency skill development in their organization, and 35% (seven participants) of survey respondents were not using a company cultural transformation process. Building in an education process to ensure clarity and creating openness and flexibility with their agency worked for one interview participant in transforming the mindset of agency partners.

Table 12
Talent Development Factors

Factors	Explanation
Cultural competency should be a core competency for everyone at the organization with decision-making power to move the organization forward.	Training, skill building, and experiences provided to develop those competences in a real way, not just on the surface.
Specific development required to start thinking about cultural inclusion earlier in the process.	Skill building on culture and what it means.
Clarify and define terms.	Clarify what we mean by culture, inclusion, and insights.
Educate on how to apply different multicultural strategies.	More consistency around educating people; they will feel like they have more options.
Cultural competence can be a barrier.	Skills at high levels in the organization are lacking. Cultural dexterity to appreciate cultural nuances is lacking.
Training required from insights to the front-line sales team. Everyone should be a multicultural marketer.	Throughout the process, enterprise wide.
Use experiential developmental tools to understand cultural insights.	Preparing marketing team for the competencies required for cultural inclusion.
Retail customer requesting skills and inclusion capabilities.	Ask them to show them how to do this.
Incorporate cultural inclusion development into the performance management and overall business process approach.	Use performance measurement for skill development across the organization.
Had to educate the external agency to ensure clarity and create openness and flexibility.	Transform the mindset of the agency partners.
Encouraged our agency to think about insights, not their own beliefs or perspectives as they thought they knew the brand.	Be persistent about the consumer insights you are leveraging and determine if they are inclusive.

The participants all had some degree of training with varying success. There was agreement that better skills were required, with some questions surfacing on what is needed to increase the effectiveness of the teams.

> People came out to the cross-cultural training. It was rudimentary and laid the groundwork, but did not tell them the how. They need better skills. We gave examples; now we need to know, how do we create processes? (Interviewee)

> We have not done a good job of educating people about precepts, ideas, and philosophies to hang their hat on as a starting point, and then they can ask their agencies next. If you asked 10 people you will get 8 different answers. (Interviewee)

The participants agreed cultural training and development is necessary for all stakeholders involved in the process, for both internal and external partners. As the importance of cultural dexterity increases and multicultural insights are infused throughout general market, one participant recommended the following new paradigm:

> Those that work on and specialize in multicultural insights—people, agency, media—are on one side. General organizations are on the other side. Each of the groups is on opposite ends of the spectrum. The marketplace is in the middle. There is more influence of people of culture informing the whole than ever before. In order to operate and navigate on both sides of the equation, you need to have skills on both sides in one place. Neither side of the equation has the cultural dexterity and aptitude that matches or mimics what is happening in real life. Whoever starts to build capabilities and competencies toward that center consistently, at a high quality and at scale, is going to be in a better position to not only change how things are going but also see great results. (Interviewee)

Building in creative and innovative methods of cultural inclusion development surfaced an example of a new approach in skill building, as one participant shared,

> We have used ethnography studies, over 30 of them, to develop the team. We brought them (brand teams) to multicultural moms and it was an eye opener to be that close to the consumer. For many it was their first multicultural mom they had ever spoken to in their life. (Interviewee)
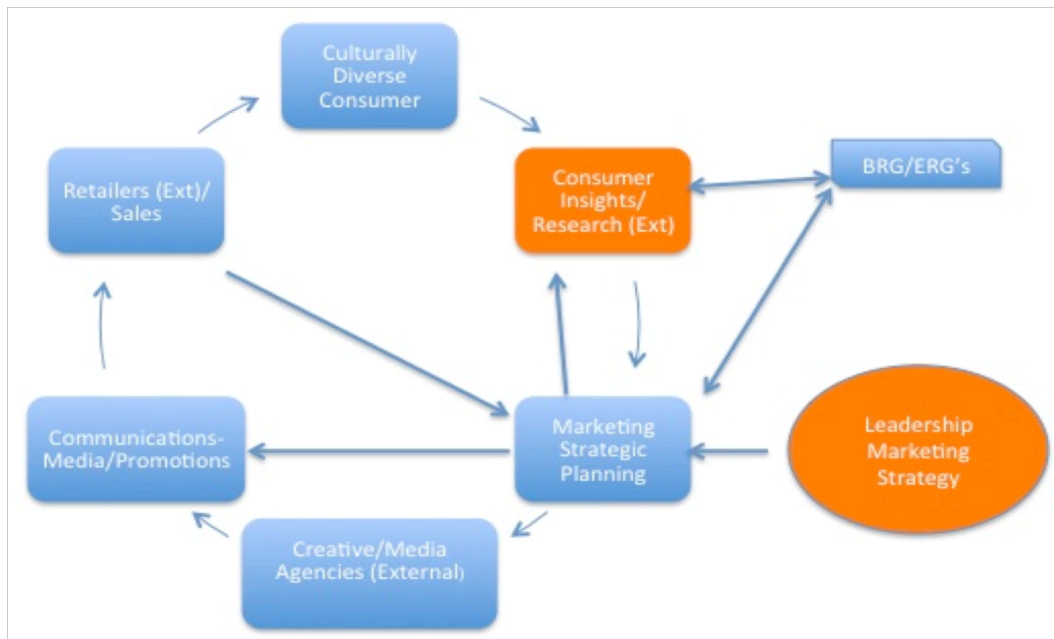
Figure 1. Integrated marketing communications process.

Note. BRG = Business Resource Group; ERG = Employee Resource Group.

Process recalibration. Figure 1 illustrates the primary components in the IMC process described by the participants interviewed. The interviewees all agreed that it is hard to successfully embed cultural inclusion throughout the marketing process for brand performance. The components of the marketing process where cultural inclusion and insights are embedded are considered valuable to business performance. The most valuable components were identified by the survey respondents as (a) completely and always, (b) sometimes, or (c) not at all important. Components ranked by the participants as completely or always valuable are listed in Table 13.

Table 13

Survey Respondents' Most Valuable Components for Cultural Inclusion

Marketing Component	# Responses
Brand Strategy	15
Business Strategy	12
Creative – Advertising, Casting, and Music	12
Content Development	11
Research and Consumer Insights	11
Media Planning and Buying	10
Business and Performance goals	9
Promotions	7
Public Relations and Publicity	7
Leadership strategy	6
Events and Experiential	5
Product Development and Innovation	5
Sales and Point of Purchase	4

Note. $N = 20$.

There were gaps identified in the process described by participants covering a variety of areas in the IMC (see Table 14). The success described by the participants came when they were able to facilitate structured and intentional interventions to engage in meaningful dialogue. Learning consumers' needs and evaluating how to successfully integrate cultural inclusion into the process also contributed to success. Pulling in all related departments, partners, stakeholders, assets, and tools together for greater alignment and continuity was a key approach. Successful examples also included better conversations and better awareness upfront with external partners.

Table 14
Process Recalibration Considerations

Considerations	Explanation
Building the right infrastructure.	Requires efficiency versus growth opportunity.
Embed very early in the process.	A year or two out front of tapping into connections strategies for audiences that are underleveraged.
Plan on how to make it work. People on the team must feel like they are having an impact.	Different from how they were used to working. Everyone owns the process.
Embedded into the entire go to market process.	Depending on the product you have to use cultural insights from beginning to the front line.
Starts broad than narrows. Involve senior people (CMO, VP, SVP) first to see and internalize the concept.	When the process is more tangible the brand and media team can then get involved.
Requires constant dialogue at the CMO level.	Increase communications on what is needed.
Encourage more innovation and experimentation.	Experiment with cultural spaces rather than just in our comfort zone. Will create more dynamic innovation. More viral and more ROI impact.
Current process moves too fast.	Creative environments move too quickly for intervening.
Taking the extra step to understand the differences.	Opportunity to differentiate from a general market campaign.
Need a consistent approach.	Need a consistent approach and methodology to engage multicultural consumers.
Team collaboration around the same information, process, and direction.	Working in siloes with different information causes inconsistencies.
Various stakeholders—research, external sales force can be integrated in the infrastructure.	Specialized sales force, markets identified with an objective and strategy, and tactics to drive business.

Considerations	Explanation
Check measures are at multiple levels.	Identify target groups and opportunity. The divisions are tasked to make it happen.
Create centralized sources and tools.	Guidelines, processes, and research for external stakeholders created success.
Consultancy and Center of Excellence Need to reduce inconsistency.	Provide insights, guide strategy, help access and offer tools and information, then measurements and feedback.
People sit on the team rather than in silos not infiltrating the message.	Balance of building capabilities and growing the business.
Evolving cultural branding process.	Pre and post conversation—brand-vetting process.
Create new processes for evaluating brands.	More "on ramps" and less "cul-de-sacs."
The application is the biggest challenge.	The brand team understands it; they value it, and do not know how to apply it to the activation.
Forces precision and thoroughness.	Align objective and strategy to talk about the cultural nuances in a unique and compelling way.
Annual presentations.	Assess current growth and biggest opportunity.

Note. CMO = Chief Marketing Officer; VP = Vice President; ROI = Return on Investment; SVP = Senior Vice President.

The participants were probed for examples of brand success in the cultural inclusion process from end to end. One participant shared a recent example:

A brand targeting multicultural females was an unlikely success. It was a total market opportunity that effectively demonstrated a total market approach, marketing to females and multicultural women. We created one campaign that was total market and culturally progressive at its core. It worked everywhere rather than creating a bunch of one off efforts. (Interviewee)

Not all organizations are finding brand success. There are still many challenges in the process around focus and orientation regardless of the business intention and overall goals.

> It is still a general market orientation around how to communicate a message to the general market. The aberration is then, how do we talk to these multicultural consumers. It is still not at the forefront. At the same time we acknowledge that the multicultural consumer impacts and influences trends, style, fashion. I find that a tremendous disconnect. If you acknowledge intellectually that these groups influence and impact everything in society, but you are not leading with an acknowledgement in what they are about. How are they a special part of the communications? That loses it for me. (Interviewee)

To overcome the challenges in the process a participant described an intentional process designed to recalibrate the marketing communications process and raise awareness of cultural nuances.

> [We] designed a client consortium to take them on the long haul. We helped them with the challenges they are facing and provided recommendations that leveraged the knowledge in new ways. They were able to connect to the audience differently than they have previously. Key steps were created in the process where the client is involved at every level. (Interviewee)

Creative and media process. Interview participants shared concern about the creative process in particular (see Tables 15 and 16). According to the respondents, the importance of cultural insights infused into the creative in the correct way was significant to require greater attention and potential barriers. Participants commented on an improved and tighter process of both setting and becoming clearer on the expectations upfront.

Table 15
Creative and Media Process Considerations

Considerations	Explanation
Creating cultural inclusive advertising is the biggest frustration.	Inclusiveness is a part of the creative process now.
Improved and tighter process of setting and becoming clearer on the expectations in creative process upfront.	All three groups (creative, content, strategy) are mindful of casting and work closely together.
Cultural workshop when creating a brand platform—review past, present and future.	Look at the consumer trajectory, penetration, buying habits, what is over and underindexing.
Brand idea is written in collaboration, one creative process, one brief, or else we can't evaluate the idea.	
Disrupt habit of traditional media selection.	If brand is underperforming, create an intervention.

Table 16
Recalibrating the Cultural Insights Process

Considerations	Explanations
Cultural insights must connect back to strategy.	Process happens so fast in creative organizations, and the cultural insight is forgotten and loses relevance with consumer. Focus on activation only.
Integrate and instill true cultural insights across the agencies and partners as a core part of the business.	Integrate throughout the process.
Cultural brand process—starts with pockets of penetration, biggest business opportunities, triggers to recruit, how to use those triggers to feed into your brand, creative starts.	Have to create different assets for different consumers built on the same ideas. Can't assume what the creative is going to be since you don't know the triggers.

Considerations	Explanations
Create a master brief—a deeper dive uncovering culture coming up in everything as a part of the process.	What are they feeling at a certain time, any macro trends.
Cultural insights and strategic partners inform the big idea or innovation.	It should be the engagement of the how not the what.
Find an insight that is really total market. A more inclusive effort will make you seem more contemporary by that alone.	A process that is normal in some industries is not always understood in some organizations.
Integrating different strategies is a process—general market, African American, and Hispanic.	Presenting at different times by different people was not ok.
Highlighting classical relationships in a culturally relevant way.	We hit on the cultural insights quite well and really broke through and will continue on that path for some time.

An area of challenge in crafting an effective cultural inclusion process expressed by the participants was with creative agency external partners. The study surfaced a point in the process that is incredibly important to get right, the cultural insights. One study participant suggested the need for a more holistic philosophy of the consumer needed at this time.

> You have to get the insights right. It has to go beyond the obvious. Everybody has the obvious stuff. Everyone knows that multicultural consumers drive trends. Traditional agencies need a more holistic philosophy of consumers. They should be asking, who is driving consumers? How are you scripting your advertising model to attract that? (Interviewee)

Retailer external stakeholders. All of the participants interviewed took a total system approach to embedding cultural inclusion in the marketing process (see Table 18). The ecosystem requires integration and a work process with a variety of external stakeholders. Moving to culturally inclusive marketing communications requires engaging in a change process with these same external stakeholders. The equifinality of

their transformation to a culturally inclusive process is a result of the various forms of structures and processes of working with external stakeholders of the organizations.

The organizations represented by the interviewees expressed a dependence on a retail stakeholder, 40% (six participants), distributing products through retail stores. These interviewees expressed agreement on the driving force for change coming from their retailer customers. The perception from participants was that retailers had access to better data and were closer to the end user who is culturally diverse. The retailers are seeing firsthand, the changes in store performance and sales, yet participants perceived that the retailers were not further along in embedding cultural inclusion into their processes.

Interview participants consistently perceived the external force from the retail consumer as a strong factor of increased pressure encouraging brand product marketers to change. There was interest in what other retailers are doing in this area, not only from the major retail organizations interviewed but also the customers of consumer products manufacturers. The capabilities and tools retailers need manufacturers to embed cultural inclusion in their process in response to the changing consumer demands, and business opportunities are of great interest to the participants.

Agency external stakeholder. The participants agreed it is not easy to integrate the process across both general market and multicultural agencies to create collaboration across the network system (see Table 17). The types of structures and relationships are a major component of the recalibration process according to participants (see Table 18). The marketers and agency participants disagreed on whether the change processes used thus far have been successful in embedding cultural inclusion. The participants leveraged

the insights of their agency to help craft their multicultural strategy and inform their

internal creative and marketing teams in the process.

Table 17
Type of Agency Collaboration Structures

Type of Agency Collaboration Structures	# Responses
General (traditional) agency & multicultural shops subcontracted	2
In house creative & outside multicultural and digital agencies	2
General (traditional) agency handling the total market (multicultural)	5
General Market (traditional), Multicultural agencies all reporting in separately to client/marketer	5

Table 18
External Stakeholder: Retailer and Agency Process Considerations

Considerations	Explanation
Extend planning to the retail level.	What retailers know and what they need about the changing consumer demands and business opportunity. Invest in last mile capabilities.
Creative triggers to create cultural assets and drive the business by external partners.	More assets and components now and costing too much and inefficient. Digital and media partners are doing more efficiently.
Information flow out to external partners was changed.	The process to change and streamline the process across the network system.
Agency partners can be successfully leveraged for insights and craft the multicultural strategy.	Can inform the internal creative and marketing teams in the process.
Cultural insights discipline at agencies requires realignment.	They can't find any diverse consumer to gather insights.
Media agencies appear to be a more improved external partner process	Deliver the brief together. They bring recommendations to us.

Considerations	Explanation
Constantly pushing clients to do original work rather then "transcreate," translate, shadow shoot re-edit.	If an idea is strong enough it crosses over to a broader audience.
Multicultural shops have to shift to consultancy rather than executional practice to move up in the process.	A total market approach invalidates a single market approach.
Need to create a consortium to agree on industry model and process.	Need collaboration across organizations and industry leadership and agreement on how to make the process work best with the advertising industry.
Moving dollars from traditional agencies to the idea of cocreation with directors and media companies.	Creative execution is being redefined. There is more room for embedding cultural insights.
Traditional agencies are not working either.	A change in the way creative execution is defined.
Need to work differently with research vendor to ensure representation to ensure it is set up properly.	Have to push around our level of expectation and intensity. Must be clear about the opportunity.

A participant shared the rise in importance of the retailer relationship in driving cultural inclusion investing in resources.

> Customers (retailers) were asking about our African American and Hispanic retail marketing plans. We realized that if your business does not have an answer, that is not a good place to be as an organization. (Interviewee)

Dissecting the agency collaboration process was a priority for the participants. Investments in time and resources to bring all parties together were variables that one participant attributed to the success in the process recalibration: "Agency collaboration was the first thing I tackled when I started in the first three months."

> [We] got everyone in the room for a full-day session to remap the integrated process with all of the agency partners, I "white-boarded," went through key touch points, and changed it to be more integrated. (Interviewee)

Not just about putting diverse cultures in the ads or years ago when we did the swap out thing, same scripts, lifestyle, etc. and just put people of color in there. It was a challenge and a big discussion with one of our agency partners and that was not acceptable to me—we needed to make a change. That is not inclusion. (Interviewee)

Internal stakeholder. The other internal stakeholder group used for embedding cultural inclusion throughout the marketing process is the sales force (see Table 14). The participants 27% (four participants) shared the importance of the sales team, or "the last mile," as one interview participant described them, in the system.

Employee Resource Groups and Business Resource Groups

Most of the survey participants' organizations were effectively leveraging their employee resource groups (ERGs) or business resource groups (BRGs). These groups are internal employees with a particular cultural affinity. The groups are most commonly; black; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual; Hispanic; Asian; women, moms, and so forth. Originating as an employee retention initiative, these groups are now increasingly being tasked to help drive business in the organization.

According to the participants interviewed, the ERGs and BRGs are serving increasingly important needs (see Table 19) in the marketing process for cultural inclusion, 60% (nine participants). The majority of interviewed participants expressed a shift in how they are being leveraged, or more importantly, a desire for a shift in their role and function internally for greater business performance.

Table 19
Internal Stakeholder Process Considerations

Considerations	Explanation
Incorporate ERGs/BRGs into the process. ERGs/BRGs should align their initiatives to the business goals and metrics.	Now being tasked to drive business.
ERGs/BRGs can offer value in creative process, ideas, product innovation, and identifying gaps in the product portfolio.	Stereotypes, product use, packaging, messaging.
Developing diverse suppliers as an example of an enterprise-wide integration.	Handled by diversity and inclusion department.
Shopper marketing should be connected and incorporated into the process.	Make sure there is appropriate merchandise and communications at retail.

Note. BRG = Business Resource Group; ERG = Employee Resource Group.

The participants of activities the BRGs can engage in to add value to the process

sited examples.

> BRG members doing something as simple as just taking a walk through the store on the brands behalf and providing feedback is valuable to the organization. The African American or Hispanic BRG member will be more sensitive to what is not working and what the culturally diverse consumer is looking for from us. The brand person would not see that. That would offer great value. (Interviewee)

Dissecting the marketing process to embed cultural inclusion activities by the

sales team at the local level was an example of how the process has been recalibrated for

brand performance:

> We have identified the brands, the geography or markets, down to the individual store that we know we have a distribution upside that we are not measuring. We have combined that with a specialized sales force whose job it is to call on those stores. It is integrated. There is an objective; a strategy and now we have the tactics to drive business. Now we finally have the infrastructure and the sales-force to go in and complete it. (Interviewee)

Summary

The breadth and commitment to embedding cultural inclusion in the marketing processes for the participants reflect the successes, frustrations, as well as the perceived business growth opportunities. The participants were committed to fine-tuning the process and further building capabilities in their organization. The examples of systems, tools and extensive research reflected significant demands for data and leadership to cascade the business strategy throughout the organization.

A focus on the overall business strategy and working to align cultural inclusion at the core of the brand's strategy was a common approach. The participants found inventive and traditional tools to engage both external and internal stakeholders in the transformation process. Demonstrating results to gain priority resources and support was evident. Leveraging key leadership skills necessary to continue the momentum was a consistent presence among the participants interviewed and expressed the increased focus and evolution in this area shared in the survey.

This chapter reviewed the results of the study. The final chapter presents the discussion, including a review of the findings, a discussion of key findings, as well as recommendations, study limitations, and possible areas for future research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and their implications along with references to the literature showing areas of agreement and augmentation. Finally, the chapter provides recommendations, cites limitations, and suggests areas for further research.

Summary of Findings

The primary research question was: How are consumer brand organizations building capabilities and organizing to embed cultural inclusion and insights throughout the marketing communications process? The following subquestions were also explored:

1. What components and framework support embedding cultural inclusion for sustainable results?

2. Where in the organizational design and process are there needs or barriers to cultural inclusion?

3. What gaps between current and desired states if any, exist in the structures, processes, or talent management?

Key Findings

The research findings suggest brand success relies on implementing a redefined IMC process with internal and external stakeholders. A particular focus on data collection and integrated into the process is crucial. Additionally, deeper cultural inclusion skill development, from a new breed of leadership, is pivotal to brand success. Organizations reported successful cultural inclusion results when an enterprise-wide, intentional change process was implemented and an organizational cultural shift had occurred.

Embracing a change process. Successfully embedding cultural inclusion in the marketing process requires a long-term view on leadership, strategic direction, and intentional change management interventions. The survey participants suggested highly attuned leadership skills are helpful to prioritize and implement a shift in the mindset, values, and behavior of employees and stakeholders. In effect, a closer assessment of the organizational culture might be beneficial. The complexity of the integrated marketing process engages various stakeholders, both internal and external to the organization. The added component of cultural inclusion requires a broader ecosystem participate in the process. The survey participants agreed that sales, ERGs, customers, agency, media, and resource stakeholders could all contribute or become a barrier to success. According to the study findings, stakeholders require leadership, strategic alignment, development, and a recalibrated process to ensure the conscious integration of cultural inclusion and insights.

Intentional data integration. According to study respondents, one of the most important components in embedding cultural inclusion in the marketing process was the use of data measurements at multiple points and for various purposes. Study respondents reported the data measurements were used to uncover gaps, leverage opportunities, and prioritize resources for cultural inclusion against the overarching strategy. Key data points collected, integrated, and reported to key stakeholders in the marketing process created a thread weaved throughout the process to ensure alignment internally and externally. Organizations researched that have found success uncovered new approaches, explored areas of growth, and engaged cultural insights effectively in their communications. According to respondents, without crucial data points and a process for

leveraging and integrating the data, missed crucial insights, lost market opportunities, and strategic misdirection caused frustration for organizations. Also uncovered were examples of competitive losses, client and customer dissatisfaction, and ineffective communication as a result of a lack of data integration.

Participants who described effective integration of data found it invaluable to the process of embedding cultural inclusion. The data points galvanized the organization around the potential risk and opportunity. The data worked as an enforcement, engagement, and strategic lever. Some respondents described reducing barriers and solving pressing needs through shifting the organization, leadership, and stakeholders with the appropriate data and measurement tools.

Collaborative challenges. The data suggested there are some challenges in the internal collaborative process and in the transorganizational process. The respondents indicated that addressing these challenges requires enterprise-level collaboration from a variety of stakeholders. The new product development to sales and shopper marketing to research, leveraging ERGs to the diversity, and inclusion of departments could all contribute to the cultural inclusion process. Even within the marketing departments, the data suggested that gaining effective alignment within the teams regardless of structure could still be a challenge. The participants surveyed agreed that support and alignment through the senior ranks of leadership is also a collaboration challenge. According to the participants, the interdependence of the current and potentially new stakeholder relationships requires a more attuned, deliberate collaboration to effectively embed cultural inclusion. This study found that a focus on how participants were collaborating

the alignment of the business strategy to embed cultural inclusion was required to achieve effective communication.

The survey participants agreed that working with external partners from researchers to external agencies and media partners to align with embedding the process required a retooled and refined collaborative effort. Some of the participants agreed that there are currently still gaps and barriers to alignment. Collaborating with external partners requires additional investment and refinement.

Cultural agility competence. The research participants confirmed technical needs are required to shift the organization's integration of data, such as process retooling and talent management needs. Technical solutions, however, fare poorly when improvement is dependent on a change in culture, traditional norms, or people's habits (Block, 2011). The literature suggested the development of the skill of the *sophisticated observer;* that is, the ability of individuals "to take in more diverse inputs to perceive and utilise subtle variations and nuances missed by other observers" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 436). Christensen et al. (2008) further stated, "Just as an individual can sensitize him or herself to observe and appreciate distinctions in a piece of music or in a painting, organizations can learn to observe and attend to variations they could not previously recognize" (p. 436). The findings from this study revealed that cultural agility is required for embedding cultural inclusion.

The findings suggested the desire to increase diversity on the teams and utilize basic diversity and inclusion training, but there was little focus described by the study participants on investing in building cultural agility competence. The literature suggested the challenges of cultural inclusion within teams include overcoming differences in

language and culture, developing trust and relationships, developing a common context for decision-making (Bate, Khan, & Pye, 2000; Bennett & Bennett, 2001; Davidson, 2011; Tapia, 2009). The organizations that are most successful have cultures that value and stimulate personal development. The organizational cultures that are able to bring out the full range of useful knowledge and skills through the design of jobs and training and education will be the most successful in creating an inclusive organization (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

The gap in delivering brand success in hiring, retaining, and effectively collaborating beyond technical needs highlights the need for cultural agility competence. A pivotal component to embedding cultural inclusion appears to be arming stakeholders with the ability to be sophisticated observers throughout the IMC process.

Recommendations

The marketing and communications industry landscape is fast moving, collaborative, and competitive. The study found it is also littered with challenges and barriers in the internal processes, cultural sensitivity, and diversity of thought and inclusion efforts. Encouraging inclusive leadership, such as learning the skill for inclusive collaboration by leveraging differences, can reduce costly missteps in overlooked opportunities for growth and increase competitive advantage for consumer brands.

When a brand team has the intervention tools, leadership skills, and collaborative processes that leverage cultural differences they can be more effective and confident, moving from ideas and concepts to creative problem solving, execution, and consequently business performance. Embedding cultural inclusion throughout the process

is not only an enterprise-wide goal it is also an evolution. Investment in resources, persistence, and a long-term commitment are required for a sustainable effort and a culturally agile organization. Burgos and Mobolade (2011) shared examples of how the leading brands are implementing collaborative change, and these are in alignment with the study's recommendations.

The five recommendations suggested to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for success by brands pursuing cultural inclusion are listed here and described below. First, develop intentional and courageous leadership. Second, the process should be recalibrated to align with the overall business strategy. Third, refine and deepen culturally diverse talent management. Fourth, invest in stepped-up and ongoing cultural agility development. Fifth, participate in industry-wide knowledge sharing.

The communications, data sharing, strategic alignment, and cultural nuance focus recommended require a conscious plan and transformation process across internal departments disciplines and external partners. The appropriate change management interventions, inclusive leadership development, and collaboration retooling needed in this process to be culturally relevant can have far-reaching ramifications to revenue, competitive advantage, consumer loyalty, and good will. A sustained, creative, and well-planned needs assessment and transformation process incorporating the key variables for embedding cultural inclusion unique to each organizations culture and structure are recommended.

Develop intentional and courageous leadership. The participants who have been most successful speak to the intentional and conscious action by leadership to both communicate the business performance and growth value and to access performance and

strategy levers to influence process and culture change in the organization. Leveraging differences and building inclusive leadership skills will support the cultural change process. A focus on formal and informal dimensions in communications for the most desirable outcomes supports Christensen et al.'s (2008) recommendations. Effective competency hiring and building cultural competency in current leadership through training and experiential learning is a start. Working with a cross-cultural executive coaches specializing in executive-level inclusive leadership to ensure intentionality and goal setting throughout the process is another option. Weaving cultural inclusion into communications, strategic planning, leadership performance, talent management, presentations, accountability, and even informal and formal meeting requires building new habits. Bennett and Bennett (2001) described the organizational view in a culturally inclusive environment as those in the adaptation stage. "Organizations characterized by adaptation encourage educational training for executives and managers in both the mindset and skillset of intercultural competence. Typically, upper-level executives take a leading role in supporting intercultural development in the organization" (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, p. 23).

Internal as well as external strategy alignment at the leadership level from the top down is recommended and integrated throughout the corporate culture. For example, marketing managers responsible for multicultural or cross-cultural growth could incorporate a key performance indicator in employee reviews, tying it into incentive compensation.

Process recalibration to align with the business strategy. The findings in the research described a consistent need to improve and invest in the process to fully embed

inclusion. The disconnections in the process linking back to strategy, not fully utilizing the data that exists, or missing opportunities to leverage cultural diversity from internal and external stakeholders all speak to the process recalibration needed. These findings are in line with the structural integration process, which Cox (2001) described as crucial to move from a pluralist organization to fully leveraging inclusion. Consistent refinements and attention to the measurements and process support O'Mara and Richter's (2011) benchmarking recommendations. Revamping the reward systems, training, conflict resolution, performance feedback, bias reduction training, formal and informal networks, research, focus groups, and surveys are all necessary elements in an organizational structure. Hardwiring inclusion into the organization's mission, growth, and profitability strategies and into the creation, design, marketing, and selling of the company's products and services will be required. Investing in the process is supported by Ely and Thomas' (2001) study conducted on work groups. The groups that were more successful invested time spent exploring their different points of view and deliberating about whether and how they should inform the work (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

Hardwiring a process that is adapted and fine tuned to fully leverage inclusion would include an audit of the current data capabilities, integration, and enterprise-wide process. One example would be the engagement in a facilitated process with key stakeholders to collaborate on how best to weave cultural inclusion throughout the process. The facilitated stakeholder process would include collaborating to build the right tools, integrating them most effectively, and communicating the right data out to appropriate stakeholders, partners, and leadership for strategic alignment and process integration.

Refine and deepen culturally diverse talent management. The high value placed on collaboration and a team approach in the marketing process requires team members to possess increased levels of openness to different cultural experiences, as it will be necessary for inclusive teams to be more open to cultural differences within the team structure. As the research data supported, talent acquisition will continue to be a challenge but is a high priority for organizations. There will continue to be a short supply of culturally diverse, skilled, marketing talent. The literature and research support the importance of acquiring talent across the organization with cross-cultural skills. All members of an organization must have the ability to function at a high level across cultural paradigms. Such skills are as relevant to the employee whose work appears to be localized as the one whose work is superficially broader in scope (American Institute for Managing Diversity, 2006).

The recommendation is to audit current practices, training, and development on unconscious bias in acquisition and retention. The transorganizational nature of IMC requires a stepped-up focus and attention to the external partners and vendors. Any organization that touches the marketing process should be closely aligned with the cultural inclusion strategy, particularly in talent management and cultural agility skill competencies. In addition, strategic, long-term recruitment planning and relationship building of potential internal and external culturally diverse mid- to senior-level executives will be required. Those organizations most successful are those cultures that value and stimulate personal development.

Invest in stepped-up and ongoing cultural agility development. The research raised a need for marketing to respond to cultural nuances in the continuous shifts

occurring domestically and globally. According to the participants, building capacity to recognize and effectively respond to cultural differences is ongoing moving forward in organizations. Raising the awareness of cultural agility as a crucial skill and competency throughout the enterprise starts with measurements of the current state. Individual, group, and organizational cultural competency assessments with individual and group developmental plans cocreated by the stakeholders allows for customization and accountability. Ownership and measurable development ensures alignment across the ecosystem. Leadership placing value, priority, and reward consequences adds to the consciousness of the values and behaviors and embeds cultural inclusion throughout the organization. The recommendation is in alignment with Bennett and Bennett's (2001) suggestions for organizations. In order for intercultural development to occur knowledge, attitude, and behavior must work together (Bennett & Bennett, 2001).

Participate in industry-wide knowledge sharing. The participants expressed a hunger for industry collaboration and knowledge sharing. Creating an industry framework or guide to be used across organizations for greater learning and agility surfaced from the interviews. Every organization is unique with different capacities and challenges. This recommendation is to create a knowledge sharing mechanism for the IMC field. The knowledge sharing can be in person or virtually. It would be a repository of research and trends to be shared among organizations interested in the leading and best practices. The opportunity to share data, effective processes, case studies, and resources can support the industry as well as the many external stakeholders. Building sustainable competencies and tools is a long-term approach to a constantly changing ecosystem. Focused and frequent dialogue, access to information, and problem solving among

industry colleagues creates success for all participating organizations. The results are greater engagement for culturally diverse and increasingly more vocal employees and consumers markets, both domestic and globally.

Study Limitations

The study explored how the major consumer brands were organizing around embedding cultural inclusion and the capabilities necessary and developed across the enterprise. The sample size, while representing a wide breadth of industries and the largest organizations in the sector, was a small sample from which to draw generalizations. The participants were executive level and were responsible for wide areas in the marketing process, yet represented only one perspective filtered around their perceptions of what was needed in the organization.

Further Research

The study contributes to the literature as part of an emerging need and focus in the industry. Further research accessing a wider sample size of participant organizations in additional industries and within the organization representing additional stakeholders and levels will be necessary. To obtain broader perspectives and delve more deeply into the data collected and integrated, further studies need to be conducted on the leadership competencies, strategic alignment, cultural competencies, and talent management processes. Developing case studies on pre- and post-brand processes to measure the effectiveness of specific interventions, cultures, and talent capabilities would also add to the research.

There is limitation in self-reporting virtually and by telephone by the participants rather than within the organizational environment. Further study of the organizational

culture is recommended to deepen the exploration of the processes, the leadership style, and communication process. Future studies should also seek to understand the values, behaviors, and attitudes of talent and the stakeholders. Gaining greater perspective of the ecosystem in the IMC process, particularly in collaborative environments, will offer even greater data to broaden the discussion.

Summary

Competing for market share, continuing to be relevant, and pursing growth will elude organizations that are not building capabilities and processes to listen for the unfamiliar notes. The cultural nuances brands uncover in the marketing process may be small or they may be large cultural differences playing a significant role in the brand performance, shifting business in large numbers globally. Consciously investing in training and strategically leveraging culture inclusion throughout the marketing process is a strategic imperative. Courageous leadership can build the cultural agility and process shift that completes the symphonic sounds that reverberate throughout the whole enterprise in measurable ways.

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Appendix A:

Online Survey and Consent Form

**Topic: The Role of Cultural Inclusion
in the Marketing Process of Consumer Brands**

You have been selected for participation in this short survey as an executive leading one of the top consumer brands. Your participation is strictly voluntary and is expected to take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

The purpose of the study is to explore how consumer brands are structuring their organizations, processes and developing leadership and talent to better prepare for the increased importance of embedding cultural insights and/or inclusion throughout the marketing process for business performance domestically and globally.

The results will be confidential and no identifiable information will be used in the final document. There are no major or minor risks associated with the study. Only the researcher will have access to the data. An executive summary of study highlights across industries will be available for participants. Submitting the survey will signify your consent to participate.

By completing the survey you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your participation will entail and are consenting to participate in the study. You may discontinue participation in the survey at any time. If you have any questions about the survey contact: Dr. Bryant-Davis, IRB Chair, [email address, [telephone number].

We look forward to sharing the highlights.
Thank you for your support.
Carol Watson
[email address]

Embedding Cultural Inclusion Throughout the Marketing Process

Q1 What is your title or role in the organization?

Q2 What is the organization's primary industry?

- ○ Apparel (1)
- ○ Automotive (2)
- ○ Consumer Packaged Goods (3)
- ○ Financial/Insurance (4)
- ○ Food/Beverage (5)
- ○ Restaurant Chain/QSR (6)
- ○ Retail (7)
- ○ Spirits/Beer (8)
- ○ Other (9) _____

Q3 What aspects of the marketing process are you responsible for?

	Not Responsible (1)	Responsible (2)
Brand Strategy (1)		
Research/Consumer Insights (2)		
Product Development/Innovation (3)		
Advertising/Creative-casting/music/celebrity (4)		
Media - Planning/Buying (5)		
Events/Experiential (6)		
Promotions (7)		
Public Relations/Publicity (8)		
Sales/Point of Purchase (9)		
Other (10)		

Q4 Cultural Inclusion is defined as the concept of consciously including and valuing cultural insights from diverse consumer, employees, research and data sources. Culture is defined as ethnic, national, gender, sexual preference, religious culture. How is the concept of cultural inclusion referred to in your marketing process?

○ Cross-cultural marketing (1)
○ Cultural Insights (2)
○ Ethnic Marketing (3)
○ Multicultural marketing (4)
○ Targeted marketing (5)
○ Total marketing Strategy (6)
○ Other (7) _____

Q5 How would you rate the IMPORTANCE of cultural inclusion in your marketing process?

- ○ Not at all Important (1)
- ○ Very Unimportant (2)
- ○ Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)
- ○ Somewhat Important (4)
- ○ Extremely Important (5)

Q6 How would you rate the USE of cultural inclusion in the marketing process or brand?

- ○ Short of expectations (1)
- ○ Meets expectations (2)
- ○ Exceeds expectations (3)

Q7 Please rate the areas where cultural inclusion is embedded or considered in the marketing process

	N/A (1)	Sometimes (2)	Completely/Always (3)
Brand Strategy (1)			
Research/Consumer Insights (2)			
Product Development/Innovation (3)			
Advertising Creative - casting/music/celebrity (4)			
Media - Planning/Buying (5)			
Events/Experiential (6)			
Promotions (7)			

Public Relations/Publicity (8)			
Sales/Point of Purchase (9)			
Other (10)			

Q8 For the areas where cultural inclusion is currently embedded in the organization, what is currently done?

	Not used/Does not apply (1)	Sometimes used (2)	Effectively Used (3)
Brand/Marketing Strategy (1)			
Job Responsibility (2)			
Leadership/Champion (3)			
Organizational Culture (4)			
Organizational Strategy (5)			
Organizational/Department Structure (6)			
Marketing Process (7)			
Rewards/Incentives (8)			
Training/Skill Development (9)			
Other (10)			
Click to write Statement (11)			

Q9 In your opinion, please rate the effectiveness of components in embedding cultural inclusion in the marketing process

_____ Brand/Marketing Strategy (1)
_____ Job Responsibility (2)
_____ Leadership/Champion (3)
_____ Organizational Culture (4)
_____ Organizational/Department Structure (5)
_____ Marketing Process (6)
_____ Rewards/Incentives (7)
_____ Training/Skill Development (8)
_____ Other (9)

Q10 Please rate the use and effectiveness of cultural inclusion development resources and tools

	Not used (1)	Used and Not effective (2)	Effective (3)
Affinity/Business Resource Groups (1)			
Coaching/Mentoring (2)			
Cultural Competency Skill Development (3)			
Diversity and Inclusion training (4)			
Diversity recruitment/retention (5)			
Employee Engagement Survey (6)			

External resources (7)			
Leadership development (8)			
Other training/process (9)			
Other (10)			

Q11 Would you be willing to participate in a 30-45 minute phone or in-person interview to discuss your experiences with cultural inclusion?

- ○ Yes (1) _____
- ○ No (2)

Appendix B:

Study Invitation

Dear_____:

As a marketing industry colleague and student of Organizational Development in the Master's Program at the Graziadio School of Business and Management at Pepperdine University, I am seeking your participation in my thesis project, **The Role of Embedding Cultural Inclusion into the Marketing Process of Consumer Brands.** You have been selected for participation as an Executive leading one of the top consumer brands. There are two ways to participate, online survey and/or interview.

As a long-time executive in cross-cultural marketing and talent development I have observed the groundswell of industry research and organizational design and development underway to determine productive and valuable ways for consumer brands to leverage cultural insights and inclusion skills throughout the marketing process in a sustainable way. The **convergence of total marketing strategies, diversity and inclusion and organizational development** is still in its infancy. This study will explore how consumer brands are structuring their organizations, processes and developing talent to better prepare for the increased importance of embedding cultural inclusion into the marketing process for business performance. A framework of workforce, workplace and marketplace cultural insight inclusion working in concert will hopefully emerge.

[Link to survey]

Your time and participation is greatly appreciated. The online survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. We are also conducting a scheduled, phone interview following the online survey, which should take, at most 45 minutes to complete. The results will be confidential and no identifiable information will be used in the final document. **An executive summary with highlights across industries will be available for participants.** Submitting the survey will signify your consent to participate. You will be able to discontinue your participation in the survey at any time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly, [telephone number].

Sincerely,

Carol Watson

[email address]

Appendix C:

Interview Questionnaire and Script

Thanks for your interest in the study. I am conducting this interview as part of my thesis, in partial fulfillment of my Master's in Organization Development at Pepperdine University. The aim of this research is to learn how consumer brands embed cultural inclusion into the marketing processes. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any question, at any time, for any reason.

Before we begin, I want to reiterate that your responses will be kept confidential. With your consent, I will audio-record this interview so I can focus on our conversation. The recording will be used only to create notes of our conversation and then it will be erased. Your responses will be recorded and identified by a participant code. Only aggregate data will be included in the study.

Interviewer Guide

The phone/face-to-face interview is a follow-up on the online survey that the participants have completed.

1. Tell me about a recent brand marketing campaign

2. How do you currently account for sub-cultural or cross-cultural insights in the process?

3. What does integrating cultural insights mean to you and your organization

4. Were there any cultural insights included? What were they?

5. Can you describe how those insights are currently integrated into the process?

6. What parts of the marketing process have you found to have the **greatest** integration of cultural insights? Why?

7. What are the parts of the marketing process where there is the **least** integration of cultural insights? Why?

8. In your opinion, how does your current organizational design (structure, process, roles/responsibilities, strategy, rewards/incentives) support cultural inclusion in the marketing process?

9. How do the current diversity and inclusion initiatives affect the marketing process? (e.g. recruitment, affinity groups, cultural competency training, external resources)

10. How, in your opinion where in the marketing process would integrating cultural insights add value?

11. How do you currently measure the effectiveness of cultural insights and inclusion in the marketing processes?