How America’s Largest Nonprofit and For-Profit Corporations are Communicating CSR and DEI

An analysis of how the two sectors are demonstrating commitment to CSR and DEI through their most public-facing communications outlets.

Colette Zepponi
NPA 662: Nonprofit Data Analysis - Capstone
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Instructor: Marco Tavanti Ph.D.
INTRODUCTION

- Rise in social, environmental and political activism over the last few years
- Growing urgency to address social, environmental, and racial issues
- Increased pressure on large corporations both for-profit and nonprofit
- General distrust of large corporations
- Questions of authenticity of efforts being made
OVERVIEW

Focus on the Big Guys

Analyze America’s largest for-profit and nonprofit corporations’ DEI and CSR communications.

When money and resources aren’t an issue, what’s the excuse?

Looking at Key Communications Outlets

Survey for DEI and CSR content present on their Websites, Job Listings, Reporting, as well as Social Media

Also measuring level of commitment and effectiveness

Why External Communications and Social Media

Publicly available information.

Measuring commitment through strategic communications.

Social media as a more interactive platform to engage with audiences.
PURPOSE - OBJECTIVES

- Determine if and how larger corporations are listening to the public demand for Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts
  - Real impact vs. performative/greenwashing: understanding what is genuine

- Identifying trends across sectors.
  - Is one sector more diligent than the other?

- Understand how large corporations are using their social influence for public betterment
Selection Process for Corporations:
Using Nonprofit Times 100 and Fortune 500 lists, select corporations from the 5th, 50th, and 75th percentiles:
For-profit: Amazon, Wayfair, Constellation Brands
Nonprofit: United Way, PBS, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

External Communications: Measuring CSR/DEI Content
Use content analysis to look at Website, Job Listings, and Reporting for DEI & CSR Content
1pt = CSR/DEI content present with strong messaging
0.5 pt = CSR/DEI content loosely present
0pt = No CSR/DEI content present

Social Media: Measuring Dedicated CSR/DEI Posts
Counting DEI/CSR-related posts on Instagram over a 1 year period for each corporation (May 1 2021-April 30, 2022).
- Looking at actionable posts (CTAs) and advocacy months to determine authenticity of public commitment to DEI and CSR
## External Communications: Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
<th>JOB LISTING</th>
<th>REPORTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Page</td>
<td>Website home page contains CSR/DEI-related messaging</td>
<td>Formal Report: There are formal DEI/CSR reports available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation Bar</td>
<td>Website contains CSR/DEI-related tab on dropdown menu in navigation bar</td>
<td>Consistency: The corporation has been reporting DEI/CSR for 3+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Footer</td>
<td>Website contains CSR/DEI-related links in footer</td>
<td>Accredited: The corporation uses an accredited DEI/CSR reporting system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated Page(s)</td>
<td>Website contains dedicated page(s) to CSR/DEI</td>
<td>Clear, Measurable Goals: The corporation includes clear, measurable goals rather than statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Website contains partnerships related to CSR/DEI</td>
<td>Awards: DEI/CSR-related awards have been received by the corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Page</td>
<td>Website contains career page with DEI/CSR-related messaging</td>
<td>Expert Review: The corporation seeks expert input to support DEI/CSR reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>Website contains DEI/CSR messaging in mission statement</td>
<td>Other: The corporation provides other resources to support DEI/CSR reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Us</td>
<td>Website contains DEI/CSR messaging in about us page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Website contains other DEI/CSR resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### JOB LISTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement*</th>
<th>Job listings contain DEI/CSR statement *if statement is listed at top of page, weighted more than bottom of page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Job listings contain inclusive DEI/CSR statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs Available</td>
<td>Job listings contain DEI/CSR-related jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated Department</td>
<td>Job listings indicate departments dedicated to DEI/CSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>Job listings contain mission statement related to DEI/CSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Job listings contain other DEI/CSR-related messaging/content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REPORTING

| Formal Report: There are formal DEI/CSR reports available | Consistency: The corporation has been reporting DEI/CSR for 3+ years | Accredited: The corporation uses an accredited DEI/CSR reporting system | Clear, Measurable Goals: The corporation includes clear, measurable goals rather than statements | Awards: DEI/CSR-related awards have been received by the corporation | Expert Review: The corporation seeks expert input to support DEI/CSR reports | Other: The corporation provides other resources to support DEI/CSR reporting |
External Communications: Website, Job Listings, and Reporting

- Same average scores for DEI overall from both sectors, but the for-profit sector is much stronger in CSR
  - Nonprofits are doing way more for DEI, but not communicating it
- While for-profits scored higher in CSR, greenwashing was very prevalent through:
  - Sustainability certifications, selective language, unmeasurable goals/statements
- Very little DEI reporting from both sectors.
- For-profit had more far CSR/DEI content and messaging in Job Listing criteria

NONPROFIT AVG SCORE: 8.7 / FOR-PROFIT AVG. SCORE: 12.2
Social Media: Percent of DEI & CSR Posts on Social Media Within Last Year

- Closer correlation to color coded bars signifies consistency in CSR/DEI posts with CTAs
  \[ \rightarrow \text{Higher commitment to DEI/CSR} \]
Social Media: Percent of DEI & CSR Posts on Social Media Made within Advocacy Months

- Higher bars signify most of corporation’s overall DEI/CSR posts in the last year were made during advocacy months.
- Larger gaps between correlated colors means a post was made, but without a CTA or actionable resource.
  → Doesn’t effectively communicate commitment and reads as performative.
IMPLICATIONS

For-profits are communicating CSR and DEI better through external communications, but nonprofits are showing stronger commitment to DEI on social media.

Nonprofits are still not prioritizing CSR enough through external communications and social media.

Talking is not enough; there needs to be more measurable goals and actions to show true commitment.

Greenwashing is still very prevalent amongst for-profit corporations.

Overall commitment to CSR and DEI is still low amongst both nonprofit and for-profit corporations, based on actionable and dedicated communications.
Both sectors need to be held to higher standards of CSR and DEI reporting to increase credibility and public trust.

Create more actionable dialogues with corporations’ specific involvement in CSR and DEI through social media and external communications.

Prioritize DEI and CSR language on job listings and invest in dedicated jobs and departments related to CSR and DEI.

Integrate CSR and DEI into business/development models rather than relying on strategic communications to prove true commitment.
Thank You!

Questions?
REFERENCES


Diana Stork, Emmanuel College Jill Woodilla, Sacred Heart University https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=ijamt


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Colette Zepponi, MNA - Master of Nonprofit Administration - Capstone Project

**SUMMARY**

This research will be centered around a content analysis of DEI and CSR external communications strategies from a selection of companies pulled from the Fortune 500 and Nonprofit Times 100 lists. It will look closely at some of the wealthiest for-profit and nonprofit corporations to analyze how they are incorporating CSR and DEI into their communications to measure each sector’s level of commitment and assess how each of the sectors could learn from one another. The purpose of the research is to measure DEI and CSR efforts and commitment across two sectors with seemingly different initiatives—to make a profit, and to serve a cause—on an ever-evolving field, and to determine if one sector is more diligent than the other in prioritizing DEI and CSR through their external communications, and what could be done to strengthen investment in CSR and DEI across both sectors.

**METHODS**

- **Content analysis** will look at key external communications outlets: social media, website content, job postings, reports, and any other public-facing materials to measure how CSR and DEI are being prioritized through organizations’ strategic communications and with what level of commitment. We will look at 3 for-profit corporations and 3 major nonprofit organizations to analyze CSR/DEI communications around DEI and CSR, and determine if one is more diligent than the other in prioritizing DEI and CSR through their external communications efforts, and what could be done to strengthen investment in CSR and DEI across both sectors.

**PURPOSE**

The research will evaluate corporate CSR and DEI data from 2020 and 2021 from 3 for-profit corporations and 3 major nonprofit organizations to analyze how CSR and DEI are being prioritized through organizations’ strategic communications. The analysis will focus on the CSR and DEI content present in each organization's social media, job listings, and reporting, and the second analysis will focus on Instagram social media content.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How are CSR and DEI communications aligned with the capacity and strategy of each organization?
2. What level of commitment to CSR and DEI has been demonstrated in organizations’ social media communications efforts?
3. How authentically do these efforts line up with their other forms of external communications?
4. Which corporations are most effective in communicating CSR and DEI strategies? What are they doing right?
5. How do they 2 sectors learn from one another regarding CSR and DEI efforts, and how effectively communicate them to the public?

**RESULTS**

1. **Social Media and DEI/CSR Related Posts**
   - For-profit corporations communicate more frequently and consistently than nonprofits.
   - Nonprofits are more likely to use Instagram for DEI/CSR communications.
   - For-profit corporations tend to use DEI/CSR as a tool for marketing and promotion.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **For-Profit**
   - Increase DEI/CSR messaging in job listings and on career pages.
   - Create more dialogues around CSR and DEI through social media and external communications.
   - Increase the level of commitment to CSR and DEI through social media and external communications.

2. **Nonprofit**
   - Integrate DEI/CSR into business/development models more effectively.
   - Increase the level of commitment to CSR and DEI through social media and external communications.

**REFERENCES**


LEARNINGS

- Broaden the sample pool to give more credibility to the results and averages.
- Focus on one area of communications more in depth to provide more specific recommendations.
- Compare corporations within similar fields to better understand the trends within industries.
- Defining CSR and DEI content could be very subjective, especially for social media.
- CTAs on social media didn’t always equate to commitment
  - CTAs should be reflective of their own efforts.