

Case Study: Cox Media Group Diversity Council Summit

Introduction

Cox Media Group (CMG) is an integrated broadcasting, publishing, direct marketing and digital media company that includes the national advertising rep firms of CoxReps. Additionally, CMG owns Cox Target Media, which operates Valpak, one of North America's leading direct marketing companies, and Savings.com, a leading online source for savings. The company's operations currently include 14 broadcast television stations and one local cable channel, 57 radio stations, eight daily newspapers, more than a dozen non-daily publications, and more than 100 digital services. CMG currently operates in more than 20 media markets and reaches approximately 52 million Americans weekly, including more than 30 million TV viewers, more than 4 million print and online newspaper readers, and 14 million radio listeners. All of the multi-faceted services mentioned are provided by an energetic, diverse and engaged work force of approximately 9,000 employees.

CMG's mission and goal is to build on the foundation and talents of their core with **speed, passion and courage** in transforming CMG into a digital media company by creating scalable content and advertising services businesses.

CMG believes its' employees are the most important resource they have; therefore they strive to hire the best and brightest. It is with this belief that it strives to create an environment that is entrepreneurial, nurtures personal development and builds on unique talents. CMG also firmly believes that its people thrive because individual points of view, experience and expression are valued.

By embracing their values, CMG encourages employee creativity, inclusion and calculated risk taking, faithfully fulfills customers' and audiences' needs, seizes new business opportunities when the time is right, and does what's right for communities, through sponsorships, donations, and volunteer activities.

CMG's stated values are:

- Our employees are our most important resource. We encourage entrepreneurship and initiative. We recognize and reward achievement.
- We are committed to having a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. We embrace and foster an environment that builds on the unique talents that come from a variety of people and perspectives.
- Our customers are our lifeblood. We're dedicated to building lasting relationships with them and meeting their needs with high-quality service beyond their expectations.
- We embrace new technology to give our customers the variety and quality of services they demand.

- We invest in new business opportunities with a mixture of caution and initiative, to enhance our growth.
- We believe its good business to be good citizens of the communities we serve through volunteerism and financial support.
- We are committed to helping shape a better world through responsible company and individual actions.

CMG fosters an inclusive culture that:

- Is straightforward;
- Respects the past but is forward looking;
- Places great emphasis on open, honest, and direct dialogue;
- Handles decisions with immediacy; and
- Is innovative and knows no boxes.

CMG recognizes diversity as both a business strength and a corporate value. Its' diverse workforce makes it more responsive to an ever increasing diverse customer base and helps shape business strategy.

Diversifying its' workforce and leadership is not only how it seeks to retain and attract the very best talent, but also how it remains competitive and offers customers the best products and services in the market and ensures innovation that evolves into a digital future.

Situation

Because CMG fosters diversity through its employees, communities, products, and suppliers, it initiated a formal Diversity process in 2010. This process was developed to enhance the company's ability to leverage diversity and create inclusive workplaces as integral parts of it's' values, business strategy, mission and goals. CMG knows that strategically leveraging diversity and building inclusiveness are critical to creating and sustaining a high performing organization where employees are engaged and innovative through a culture that focuses on speed, passion and courage.

During the last year, CMG further defined its' diversity and inclusion process through a strategic consulting partnership with PRISM International. Linda Stokes, PRISM's CEO collaborated with Deborah Thomas, SVP-HR and Mary Robert, Group VP-HR to continue the progress and to move the process to the next level. Linda met with CMG's Diversity Advisory Group and Executive Sponsors to identify and plan next steps. Through this consulting partnership the following critical success factors were developed or refined:

- Clarification of Diversity Advisory Group and Executive Sponsor roles and accountability
- Created an operating structure that included committees focused on Recruiting, Retention and Development

- Enhanced the branding “Be Yourself Make us Better” and collateral for various industry recruiting events
- Expanded and clarified CMG’s business case and definitions of Diversity and Inclusion
- Developed a strategic approach to D&I with specific strategies and tactics
- Created a formalized Charter.
- Identified the important role each business team will play in the diversity process

Realizing that the success of the Diversity process depends largely on how effectively the Business Team Diversity Councils executed their roles, PRISM was asked to develop and deliver training and strategic planning opportunities for Council members.

Action

To fulfill CMG’s need to ensure a successful diversity process that supports CMG’s culture of Speed, Passion and Courage where innovation is a key outcome; PRISM developed and delivered a Diversity and Inclusion Summit for the Business Team Diversity and Inclusion Councils. The Summit was designed to:

- provide fundamental diversity and inclusion skills and knowledge
- ensure understanding of CMG’s D&I business case, charter, strategic plan and roles and responsibilities
- develop specific tactics to implement within each Business Team

The two-day Summit with approximately 90 attendees was facilitated by a team of PRISM senior consultants including Linda Stokes, Melanie Miller, Pollie Massey Battle, Darrell Butler and Erv Walker. Philip Berry, Executive Director- Association of Diversity Councils delivered an informative, energetic message that inspired and challenged the audience to strategically drive the D&I process within their teams. CMG’s senior leadership team led by President/CEO Doug Franklin played a critical role in the Summit by disseminating the business case, strategic plan, structure and expectations. The Summit featured PRISM’s Diversity and Inclusion Knowledge Map as the source for D&I knowledge and skill building, an Action Planning session to create immediately implementable tactics and Council Basics from the Associate of Diversity Councils (ADC). A brief overview of the Summit content is below.

Diversity and Inclusion Summit - “Be Yourself, Make Us Better”

Purpose: To ensure the success of CMG’s formalized D&I process through knowledgeable, competent, enthusiastic people leading the effort in their Business Teams.

Objectives:

- Understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion as a strategic approach to meeting business objectives.
- Understand the Diversity and Inclusion Process and your role
- Develop a broad awareness of diversity with an enhanced understanding of self and others
- Crystallize diversity's linkage to Business Team day to day operations (i.e. marketing, sales, customer service, delivery, reporting, technology, etc.)
- Establish, activate and engage Business Team D&I Councils
- Develop an Action Plan to begin leveraging D&I to achieve Business Team success.

Agenda

Day One

- Opening/Welcome
- Clock Interview Activity
- Diversity and Inclusion at CMG
 - The Business Case and Commitment
 - Our Strategy and Structure
 - Skills and Knowledge
- Diversity and Inclusion Training

Day Two

- Welcome and Introduction of Speaker
- Speaker
- Articulate Advocate for D&I
- Council Basics
- Create Business Team Tactics
- Lunch
- Complete Business Team Tactics, Identify Sub-committees and Schedule Next Meeting

Closing

Results

The Business Team Diversity Council members left the Summit educated and enthusiastic about leveraging D&I to help their teams be successful. They had written action plans full of tactics to immediately implement. During the afternoon session of the second day, individual Councils proudly and emphatically shared their tactics with the other Councils.

“Wow, what a great two days. I feel confident that we met our objectives and the groups left energized. Many thanks to the PRISM team for the expert consultation, tools and support to help us pull it off. I know there is a lot of hard work ahead of us, but we've set the foundation and have many more helping hands/voices to get it done.” stated Deborah Thomas, SVP-HR.

We are expecting each team to immediately go back to their units and implement the tactics they developed during this exciting Summit said Mary Robert.

Melanie Miller stated “the audience was great! They were very engaged, interactive and they were easily able to make the business connection to D&I. They eagerly shared great examples of those connections”. She also cited the following participant comments:

- "one of the best classes I've ever attended"
- "Much better than I thought it would be"
- "This was really good and as a facilitator you really made this relevant to us and our business"

Melanie also observed that CMG’s culture appears to be very supportive of diversity and inclusion. “They not only say the right words but also exhibit their belief in their behaviors as exemplified by choosing people from all levels and all parts the company to be on their diversity councils.

She further stated “It was a pleasure to work with such a committed and dedicated group. They all clearly want to do the right thing for the business and have the passion to get them there...with our help"

Darrell Butler stated, “The teams were energetic and excited about moving forward with specific tactics for their team. As they were developing their tactics you could see and feel the passion, drive and excitement”.

Erv Walker said “I was amazed at how quickly CMG is moving to involve all of their lines of business in the diversity process. This Summit is a testament to their commitment to live their “values”.”



L-R: Mary Robert, Erv Walker, Deborah Thomas, Philip Berry, Linda Stokes