

UNITY  
INC.



**JOURNALISTS OF COLOR**

## Five-Year Strategic Plan

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## **I. MISSION**

UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc. is a strategic alliance advocating fair and accurate news coverage about people of color, and aggressively challenging the industry to staff its organizations at all levels to reflect the nation's diversity.

## **II. VISION**

The journalism industry has an obligation to deliver a complete, fair and representative picture of the communities and world in which we live. In order to achieve this, diversity in the newsroom and in coverage is fundamental.

We envision a nation in which newsrooms are inclusive and reflect the communities they cover, and where people of color hold positions of influence. To achieve this we will conduct research, convene people and advocate change by offering attainable solutions to the industry.

## **III. GOALS**

- To raise awareness and participation of the media industry in understanding the diverse cultures represented by the UNITY alliance members.
- To increase representation of people of color at all levels in the nation's newsrooms.
- To increase and broaden news coverage focusing on people of color, and to dispel racial and ethnic stereotypes and myths
- To become recognized as the principal national alliance of journalism professionals advocating for diversity and multiculturalism in the news media.
- To create a self-sustaining organization with a diversified financial base that complements, and does not compete with alliance partners.

## **IV. OBJECTIVES**

- To advocate so that by 2008, the industry attains a level of representation of people of color in newsrooms of no less than 20 percent, and in particular, increases the proportion of newsroom managers to at least 15 percent.

- To become a more forceful and consistent national voice for journalists of color by regularly speaking on key diversity issues.
- To have UNITY sponsor one presidential campaign debate in the 2008 election cycle to ensure that issues critical to the nation's communities of color are addressed.
- To advocate that the industry increase news coverage of cultures represented by the alliance members by 2008.
- To increase attendance of media companies at UNITY and alliance events by 25 percent by 2008, and increase financial sponsorship of media companies at UNITY and alliance events by 25 percent by 2008.
- To secure at least three new significant funding sources by 2008.
- To achieve a balanced budget each year.

## V. STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

**STRATEGY #1: Advocacy:** Build on the existing efforts of alliance members, engage communities of color to increase understanding and spur action to hold the media accountable for accurate and balanced coverage, and engage the industry to embrace a commitment to journalism that reflects the diversity of the country and excludes racial stereotypes and myths. Educate the industry and the public about the necessity for training, hiring, promoting and retaining adequate numbers of people of color at all levels, especially in decision-making and policy positions.

### **Tactics to achieve this strategy include:**

- 1) Monitor how government and industry policies, technological changes and the proliferation of ethnic media are affecting opportunities for people of color in the news media.
  - a. Monitor FCC rulings and how consolidation will reduce employment opportunities.
  - b. Monitor impact of media consolidation and its effect on the number of jobs available to people of color.
  - c. Find ways of partnering with alternative media in an effort to increase employment opportunities and retention.

- 2) Participate in national policy debates involving journalism before federal and state regulators, and other institutions, in collaboration with other media organizations when appropriate.
  - a. Organize and host a presidential debate during the 2008 election cycle.
- 3) Serve as a resource and support system, as needed, for partners' alliance advocacy programs, helping partners innovate programs on their key issues, and advocate these issues through involvement in national and local policy debates and work with media companies.
- 4) Create a weeklong diversity training module that can be taught at universities and colleges throughout the country, utilizing experts from our associations and other institutions, focusing on the history of diversity in the news media, the impact of diversity, and efforts to diversify the media today.

**STRATEGY #2: Research:** Position UNITY as a source of information and data to bring greater momentum to the issues of diversity in the newsroom and quality coverage of people of color in the media.

**Tactics to achieve this strategy include:**

- 1) Commission research on the impact of media consolidation on the news and information needs of communities of color and issue the results to the general public and media.
- 2) Position the organization as the clearinghouse for research and data on diversity as it pertains to the industry, as well as materials originating from UNITY and its alliance partners, and from other industry and government sources.
  - a. Include content on the UNITY website and in a proposed quarterly journal.
- 3) Create a survey to track people of color at major media outlets. Use the UNITY Washington Press Corps Diversity Project as a model to continue monitoring the level of diversity in capital bureaus and local and national reporting staffs, and hold meetings with bureau chiefs and media executives.

- 4) Expand the UNITY Washington Press Corps Diversity Project to include more media outlets—to track employment history and measure whether coverage accurately represents the community it serves.
  
- 5) In cooperation with alliance members, promote the hiring of qualified journalists of color at small-market media outlets and track their careers to broaden opportunities for journalists of color and increase the supply of experienced candidates for positions at larger news organizations.

**STRATEGY #3: Convene:** Use our collective strength to convene people; on a scale larger than alliance members could individually.

**Tactics to achieve this strategy include:**

- 1) Convene an annual national town hall meeting on major diversity issues, and maintain a high-profile presence at the annual alliance association conventions.
  
- 2) Explore possibilities to expand future UNITY conventions with representatives from each alliance partner, appointing a subgroup to consider future models, content and structure.

**STRATEGY#4: Fundraising:** Create a self-sustaining organization with a diversified financial base that complements, but does not compete with, the work of its alliance partners, amplifying the impact of each partner organization and serving as a platform for collective action.

**Tactics to achieve this strategy include:**

- 1) Study the feasibility of establishing a per capita contribution from each alliance organization to UNITY as a way to support the coalition—the amount to be determined and approved by the UNITY board.
  
- 2) Consider check-off boxes to support UNITY on each alliance partners' membership application form.

- 3) Create a model by which non-alliance members can show their support for UNITY through donations. Establish different levels of sponsorship for media owners, managers and reporters. Benefits could range from invitations to and/or recognition at UNITY conventions and other events to subscriptions for UNITY publications.
- 4) Seek foundation funding for a study of media consolidation and its impact on minorities.
- 5) Create a model for fundraising and revenue generation that educates funders/supporters and prospects about the impact and value of UNITY's work.

**STRATEGY #5: Communications:** Advance the dialogue about issues related to diversity in the newsroom and provide actionable solutions and ideas.

**Tactics to achieve this strategy include:**

- 1) Create a strong internal communications infrastructure. Specifics include:
  - a. Develop a series of databases with contact information for all board members, supporters and funders.
  - b. Send regular bulletins from UNITY leadership to update internal audiences.
  - c. Write and send “action alerts” when immediate needs arise around issues, etc.
  - d. Provide talking points and materials to people who will be representing UNITY’s positions at speaking engagements or media interviews.
- 2) Explore the feasibility of developing and publishing a national subscription-based, advertising- supported quarterly journal to serve as a vehicle to explore issues of coverage, successes and failures in diversity efforts, research and trends, industry trends, impact of media consolidation, and media ownership.
- 3) Write and produce an annual report to showcase the activities of alliance members and UNITY.
- 4) Encourage alliance members to reach out to media through letters to the editor, op-eds, columns and story ideas.

- 5) Craft joint responses to issues with a letter signed by UNITY president with the signature line as follows: “Name, President, UNITY: Journalists of Color representing Asian American Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and Native American Journalists Association.”
- 6) Position UNITY leadership as spokesperson on key issues.
  - a. Pitch spokesperson to various media outlets.
  - b. Seek opportunities for bylined articles and on-air appearances on key issues, in his or her capacity as UNITY leadership.
  - c. Seek speaking engagements with key audiences.