

Inaugural Working Group Meeting - Diversity and Inclusion

Key Takeaways and Concepts – March 9, 2020

Concepts Discussed:

- **Equity** in treatment is a priority; however, equity does not mean equality in treatment. People's needs and disadvantages need to be factored into consideration
- **Greater transparency in reporting**, and greater transparency for access, is key. However, it cannot stop at access. Access is not inclusion
- **Intersectionality** – a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to equity is needed. We cannot put people into one "same" bucket
- A **rebalancing of power** and funds is needed to make more room for diversity. Everyone *belongs* "at the table". The establishment has created the barriers that keep others out. Some people feel threatened of losing their jobs/place
- Working in our industry and having a viable **career** need to be promoted and supported as a realistic goal for underrepresented identities. We need them in our pipeline, in our industry, to ensure a vibrant artistic and economic future. For this principle to resonate, talent from diverse backgrounds need to be "seen" and better supported
- **Systemic bias is everywhere**. The approach to a solution needs to be a holistic one that looks at the entire value chain as in: owning IP which is critical to success; supporting the career trajectory of talent; and the need for jobs, not just mentorship and shadowing
- There is an **industrial argument** for inclusivity. It is part of a workforce development solution; it will make us competitive

Diversity - Some Benefits:

- *Brings innovation*- diversity in teams brings innovation, productivity and creativity. Having diverse teams means openness to different points of view, and therefore to more comprehensive solutions
- Provides a *competitive advantage* - you can have access to a much wider talent pool, and thus be able to make the pipeline and organization more competitive
- Greater inclusivity *encourages representation of different viewpoints* and speaks to, and reaches, different audiences, new audiences that previously were not being tapped. By better reflecting our society, we immediately have access to a broader consumer base; people will tune in because they see themselves. For the Canadian film industry, it will allow us to gain new audiences who will become consumers of what is produced here, rather than consuming content elsewhere as they search for content that more uniquely speaks to them (an example, content by producer Shonda Rhimes)

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Concerns:

- Too many *misperceptions*. It is important to try and dispel these:
 - Assumptions that minority groups all have the *same perspective* needs to be de-mythologized
 - Misperceptions don't acknowledge that *racism exists between various diverse groups*, which can become exacerbated by certain misperceptions
 - *Contextualizing success*: ground-breaking achievements like CRAZY RICH ASIANS and PARASITE can be celebrated for both their creative and audience-reaching strengths, however these successes must be contextualized as anomalies. There are still many barriers
 - Lack of diversity is seen as a problem for the underrepresented identities – whereas it needs to be better contextualized as a problem also for the established (*white*) industry
 - Challenge of terminology: diversity has lost its meaning, it has become a catch-all phrase that means everything and nothing
- *Data collection is a challenge*, but it is needed in order to identify gaps and challenges. Although it may be difficult, it can be done provided you have consent, and that the purpose, use, disclosure, retention and destruction of the data collected is clearly stated to protect privacy
 - Good data can inform and help re-align decision-making, and can help identify opportunities
 - When we track, we should track Caucasians as well as other identities
 - We should not wait for data collection to be perfectly solved before we begin to act
- *Talent needs opportunities to work*. They need to make a decent living wage. The Talent to Watch (TTW) program is great for entry level experience, but it has talent working at low rates. They need to move out of that level of participation and advance
 - Working at lower levels seems to perpetuate a cycle of exclusion to higher budgets
 - We need to support the career trajectory of talent (i.e. career path)
- *Value Chain* - need to address not only the pipeline of Telefilm (TFC), but the value chain that feeds into the pipeline of feature film:
 - Agents, casting directors need to also be from underrepresented identities. This will change who we see on screen, who is hired. Although TFC does not get involved at these pressure points, since it is the key feature film funder, if the organization makes demands, outlined its diversity expectations, it could change/influence behavior along the value chain!

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- Industry needs a wider pool of talent. Underrepresented groups are facing challenges trying to qualify for membership in unions and guilds. The qualifying demands are out of reach for many. Can the unions and guilds work to be more inclusive and lessen the restrictions to allow for more equitable access?
- *Funding Concerns* - people of underrepresented identities are made to feel as if they have to “beg” for funding – they feel as if they are *fighting for scraps*
 - There is constant pressure and demand to have to explain and “sell” their cultural perspectives. They need to constantly educate others on their culture in order to sell it
 - They continually meet with tokenism arguments – “there is already one xy person in the script”
 - “Diverse” characters shouldn’t be stereotypes. Nor should all “underrepresented” identities be wrapped up into one token character
 - People from underrepresented groups are told “no” because monies have been spent with established groups. Why are they competing for remaining funds *left over* from what others/majority are given/have access to?
 - Development has become a real challenge. Need sustainable funding for development
 - Need sustainable funding overall – supporting a career path, not just projects
- *Supporting both emerging AND established creators is critical* – funding or programs now appear to be geared to support “new” arrivals, or entry level positions in the industry; those who are already well-established/well-known do not appear to be *as supported*
 - Well-established professionals from underrepresented communities are still struggling and don’t qualify for existing programs. Although part of a bigger overall industry challenge (e.g. mid-career challenge), it is an exacerbated issue for creators from underrepresented communities
- *What of international perspective on this challenge?* Won’t more diverse content make us more competitive? Can we work with other agencies at all levels? (international, federal, etc.). Should we look at redefining what we see as success?

Approaches: There is a willingness to see and implement change – an openness to adapt

- *We need to move from Talk to... Optics to... Action*
 - People need to SEE themselves reflected in TFC’s brand, in the industry
- Incentives are better than forced quotas
- *Above and Below the line*: need more inclusivity at all levels
- We need to change who we support, which will change who we see on screen

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- Flip the discourse - let's look at addressing the overrepresentation of white people - versus solely addressing the underrepresentation of diverse identities. Data can help with this
- Need to determine what positive behaviors we expect from those we fund and work with
- Accountability and measuring are key
- If there are initiatives, they need to have a clear outcome...clear expectations
- Underrepresented talent needs to be visible to producers and commissioning producers. Promotion and visibility is important
- People in hiring positions do not have to be fearful of positively biasing in order to address inequity
- Could funding be engineered to sustainability over time instead of short term, per project? How can we look at a more sustainable model, e.g. over 3-5-year period? This could be paired with a program to promote entry level positions for minority groups with established professionals, akin to an apprenticeship program
- Underrepresented identities needed in decision-making roles: people need to see themselves in positions of power
- Should organizations like TFC look at creating a position of Director of Diversity like some other organizations?

Next Steps:

Create subcommittees from this Working Group to address some of the key challenges and issues outlined at this meeting. The subcommittees would then report back to the larger group. TFC will request and assign participation in the various committees.

TFC suggests the following Subcommittees – A Start:

Committees will begin meeting virtually by May/June 2020

- 1) Data Collection:** Telefilm, and the Industry's challenge - (3 Working Group members, plus TFC)
- 2) Career Development Initiatives** - (3 Working Group members, plus TFC)
 - The Industry Talent Pipeline: enhancing career development pathway from emerging to established for underrepresented identities
- 3) Financing Initiatives** - (3 Working Group members, plus TFC)