

Report outlines integrated strategy toward diversity and inclusion in Hollywood

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The iconic Hollywood sign. Credit: Knuckles

For Hollywood to be a more inclusive and diverse industry, companies need to implement a five-point strategy for hiring, sponsoring and promoting minorities and women—especially women of color—a new UCLA study suggests.

The study, published today, was drafted by the authors of UCLA's

Hollywood Diversity Report. It is based on an analysis of current [diversity](#) programs at Hollywood studios, agencies and other companies and interviews of 21 entertainment industry leaders with experience in diversity and inclusion efforts.

"There are many diversity hiring programs in place, but they are not always systematic or fully integrated into how companies actually do business," said Darnell Hunt, dean of the division of social sciences at UCLA, and co-author of the report. "While these programs have served as a sort of lottery benefiting a few exceptional individuals, they are not contributing to overall, sustained progress on the equitable representation of women and minorities.

"Thus, they also do not serve the larger issue of making the content that today's increasingly diverse audiences demand."

According to the report, companies can improve diversity and inclusion by following five essential practices:

- Modernize their worldviews of the evolving American audience, which is now 40 percent minority and 50 percent female. Businesses can do this by establishing a public statement about their diversity mission, setting specific goals with timelines that support the stated mission, and teaching employees that change is not only inevitable but beneficial.
- Expand hiring searches to include candidates of diverse racial, ethnic, gender, disability and LGBTQ backgrounds. In part, companies can do this by tapping into databases like Creative Artist Agency's list of TV writers of color and Women in Hollywood's female filmmakers roster, and by expanding outreach to colleges.
- Implement a robust strategy to amplify the roles of women, and women of color in particular, in leadership roles. Previous

research has shown that when women occupy leadership roles, projects and work environments are considerably more inclusive.

- Normalize compensation packages, especially for entry-level jobs, because minority hires from non-affluent backgrounds often cannot afford to take low-paying jobs despite their high-value networking opportunities.
- Structure incentives for decision makers to prioritize diversity and inclusion at all levels.

The report's title, "By All M.E.A.N.S. Necessary: Essential Practices for Transforming Hollywood Diversity and Inclusion," is derived from the key elements of each step: modernize, expand, amplify, normalize and structure.

"Clearly there is no one-size-fits all approach to this issue, and making meaningful change is a deliberate process that requires sustained effort and a commitment to carry out the work at all levels from top to bottom," said Ana-Christina Ramon, director of research and civic engagement for the social sciences division and the co-author of the new report. "We're offering a list of sustainable actions that can be refined and adapted to fit any existing efforts. This problem won't solve itself. The path ahead must be paved with intention."

The researchers write that all five practices must be integrated to achieve the kind of meaningful change that would enable Hollywood to reflect America's increasingly diverse mainstream. The Hollywood Diversity Report, which published the results of its sixth annual analysis in February, has repeatedly demonstrated that films and programs with diverse casts and creators are profitable.

"Diversity must be seen as a business imperative, because it is," Hunt said.

After the so-called "Hollywood white out" TV season of 1999–2000 began without a single new show featuring a lead character of color, the NAACP and a coalition of media and social justice organizations demanded that the entertainment industry stop systematically excluding minorities.

"We are once again challenging studios, networks and production companies to take a hard look at their workforce, to see where and if they have improved, and to seek out ways to ensure that the entertainment industry is diverse and inclusive, and to continue their focus on the creative community's acceptance of talent, regardless of age, race, religion or gender," said Vicangelo Bulluck, who as executive director of the NAACP's Hollywood bureau, led efforts against the "white out" and chaired the advisory board for the report.

The report emphasizes that because women of color represent two marginalized groups, their hiring and promotion in the industry creates even more impact. Top executives should actively sponsor their advancement, the report's authors write. Companies should also support peer-to-peer mentoring groups for women and invite [women](#) to provide feedback to their organizations on how they can be more inclusive.

The report also proposes tying executives' bonuses and rewards to diversity and inclusion goals, as well as establishing competitions—between internal departments and with outside companies—around inclusion goals. It suggests that states and municipalities can play a part by offering tax credits to create incentives for diversity hiring. The authors also laud the growing number of artists and agents who use inclusion riders in their contracts.

More information: By All MEANS Necessary – New UCLA Report on Hollywood Diversity and Inclusion Practices:

[lasocialscience.ucla.edu/wp-co ... Report-9-18-2019.pdf](https://lasocialscience.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/By-All-MEANS-Necessary-New-UCLA-Report-on-Hollywood-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Practices-Report-9-18-2019.pdf)

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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