

**The impact of diversity and inclusion on corporate reputation, communications strategy
and social citizenship**

Capstone Submission, Winter 2017

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of diversity and inclusion (D&I) through the lens of corporate reputation, communications strategy and social citizenship (corporate social responsibility). The literature review provides a snapshot of current work completed in this field along with key definitions, theories and supporting evidence, further contributing to the conversation of D&I strategy. Content analysis provides insight into how some organizations refer to, or talk about D&I on their websites. Analysis shows a very wide range of results that varies from having no reference to D&I, a ‘medium’ amount of content and materials, all the way to a comprehensive set of webpages that highlight D&I as a concept while sharing how it is implemented and practiced.

Data was also gathered from a total of 12 interviews, conducted with Canadian communications and/or D&I leaders of various industries. Some key findings include how organizations are implementing D&I programs, how D&I is impacting corporate reputation, how closely D&I should be tied to the communications function’s goals, the connection/relationship between CSR and D&I, and how D&I can impact the local community. The overarching set of takeaways is that D&I is understood by all participants as being very important in business strategy. Some organizations have only just started to consider this as part of their larger strategy, others might be slowly implementing tactics, while some organizations share very robust strategy and tactical components.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participants of this study, all of whom took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the in-depth interviews. Their encouragement in progressing the conversation of diversity and inclusion is sincerely appreciated.

I would also like to thank my capstone supervisor, Dr. Terry Flynn. Dr. Flynn provided a wealth of support and knowledge, guiding me throughout this research, from our initial conversations about the topic, all the way through to the final presentation.

In addition, I thank my fellow classmates who have provided some insightful conversations and learnings throughout this entire program. Their ongoing encouragement is greatly appreciated.

Finally, my sincerest of appreciation and gratitude to my family for their motivation over the last few years. They provided a positive space for me immerse myself into this program and complete it on time.

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1. Introduction

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) has become much more important to organizational success and can impact corporate reputation, product/service delivery, internal culture, community development and competitive advantage. According to a recent report from an online Spanish database, “...diversity can help grow sales and improve customer satisfaction, help risk management and enhance creativity and flexibility in organizational processes leading to better problem-solving” (Repositorio Digital, n.d., p. 1). This is being understood by organizations, some more than others, who are investing time and resources into building and implementing D&I strategies and programs to support a diverse workforce. This workforce is now looking much different due to well-trained and intelligent new immigrants, visible minorities, aboriginals, LGBTQ employees and those with disabilities.

We can see the impact that D&I is having by visiting corporate websites of some popular brands and organizations. From Ericsson’s website – “Our diverse group of individuals, cultures and experiences drives innovation, sets us apart from the competition and delivers high performance for our customers” (Ericsson, n.d.a). Salesforce states, “At Salesforce, we believe diversity and inclusion at all levels is critical to our business. A diverse workforce gives us the unique perspectives we need to build the most innovative products and engage effectively with customers and partners” (Robbins, 2015). Apple’s website shares, “Diversity is more than any one gender, race, or ethnicity. It’s richly representative of all people, all backgrounds, and all perspectives. It is the entire human experience.” (Smith, n.d.). D&I at the workplace can also be seen by looking at company’s board of directors, senior leadership or frontline staff. While this may hold true for some organizations, there are still many that could benefit from a ‘diversity’ facelift.

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Three important areas that are impacted by D&I are corporate reputation, communications strategy and corporate social responsibility (CSR), in some similar but also unique ways. These are collectively examined in this study. Corporate reputation is an extremely valuable asset to any organization. Dowling and Roberts (2002) state, “Good corporate reputations are critical because of their potential for value creation...there is a positive relationship between reputation and financial performance” (p.1077, para 1). Effective D&I can impact how the internal workforce thinks of an organization which also effects how external audiences view that same organization. If both viewpoints are more or less positive, this can lead to a favorable reputation.

D&I and communications strategy can work hand in hand when the importance of D&I communications is realized. D&I strategy and implementation must be communicated and implemented properly for it to have a chance at being successful, which is the area of expertise of the communications function. The more aligned D&I is to the communications or Chief Communications Officer’s goals, the greater the potential success rate. Taking this one step further, if D&I is integral to an organization, it ought to be supported by senior leadership and tied to each functional group, truly representing it as a core value.

The connection between D&I and CSR is also one to be discussed. The World Economic Forum defines CSR as, “the contributions a company makes to society through its core business activities, its social investments and philanthropy programs, and its engagement in public policy...” (as cited in, Blowfield, Jamali & Karam, 2015, p.1, para. 1). While D&I can be included as part of CSR, it might be prudent to also consider it as its own function. This would likely help ensure that strategy and implementation are generating an appropriate amount of internal support from leadership and the communications function. The connection shared is that

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both can be internally and externally facing functions with the premise of doing what ought to be done for the greater good.

2. Research Problem

As mentioned, this study aims to investigate three significant areas which can all be impacted by workplace D&I significantly; 1) corporate reputation, 2) communications strategy and 3) CSR. Diversity is not about simply filling a recruitment or retention quota of ethnic or female employees. Rather, “Diversity is about what makes each of us unique which includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs...It is a combination of the visible and invisible differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach”(Deloitte, 2011). This diversity must then be harnessed and managed to yield the highest possible impact, which happens through inclusion. Miller and Katz (2002) state that inclusion is, “... the increase in total human energy available to the organisation. People can bring far more of themselves to their jobs because they are required to suppress far less” (as cited in, Deloitte, 2011, p. 7, para. 2).

Much research has already been conducted on various areas of D&I which include its legitimate business impact, definitions and theories, inclusive leadership and more. Often, these areas are researched and analyzed individually, with little work completed on multiple areas that together can be impacted by D&I. The three categories of corporate reputation, communications strategy and CSR represent some key internal and external functions, which if woven together with D&I strategy and implementation can result in a much more harmonious, innovative and profitable organization. Simply put, “Diversity + Inclusion = improved business outcomes” (Deloitte, 2011, p. 7, para. 3).

3. Research Questions

This study attempts to investigate the relationship and impact that D&I has on corporate reputation, communications strategy and CSR. This high-level analysis aims to determine if there is indeed a direct relationship, and that organizations should consider D&I as an integral part of their organizational and growth strategy. Further research will also investigate how D&I is represented on various organizations' websites and to what extent this might be acceptable or not, given today's diverse workforce and society.

RQ1: How and to what extent, does diversity and inclusion impact corporate reputation?

Understanding the direct and indirect impact on corporate reputation can help put in perspective how much time and resources should be invested into any D&I program. Even if that D&I strategy is not promoted or shared explicitly with external audiences, the workforce themselves can become brand ambassadors, sharing positive (or negative) feedback amongst their network. Understanding and appreciating the need for a diverse board of directors, senior leadership and front line staff can have a significant impact on how D&I is viewed and its long-term impact. While the level of diversity can often diminish higher up in an org chart, being proactive in D&I and keeping it in the foreground can ensure fair representation throughout an organization. This can result in diversity of thought and potentially a competitive advantage. Do primary and secondary stakeholders think differently of an organization when diversity is clearly seen? It will also be interesting to learn if this positive or negative reputation has any bearing on financial performance.

RQ2: How and to what extent, should diversity and inclusion programs be aligned to the goals and objectives of Communications and/or Chief Communications Officer?

Which business function is the ‘owner’ of D&I? The premise being if D&I programs are welcomed as part of an organization’s culture, it will have a greater impact. Considering it is the communications function that typically manages most relationships with stakeholders, it might be wise strategy for D&I programs to be connected in some way to the CCO’s goals and objectives. However, sensitivities would likely need to be considered to not falsely promote or talk about a D&I program that may not be up to standard. Focus should be placed on developing and implementing D&I strategy so that it can become part of an organization’s culture and not just an item on a strategy checklist. To assist in this, experienced communications support may be an asset for all D&I strategy and implementation, with a strong link to corporate goals should exist.

RQ3: How and to what extent, does Corporate Canada have a responsibility and level of influence to promote diversity and inclusion by actively pursuing corporate boards, leadership teams and front line staff that are themselves diverse?

Not only should D&I be considered for the good of the organization, but also for the betterment of the surrounding community. If implemented correctly, D&I can impact the local community quite significantly and in return benefit from increased productivity and profit. In relation to CSR, D&I could be looked at as a line item on a CSR plan, and if so, it should be managed separately, as its own entity. Organizations should consider being strategically vocal and public in support of local D&I issues. By doing so, a statement is made to the workforce and external stakeholders that the organization is committed in their support. In return, brand loyalty

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from customers, suppliers and partners can be significantly beneficial. D&I strategy can very well be self-serving and benefit the organization just as much if not more than a ‘greater good’.

However, how much benefit to the greater good that is brought about is what will be important to understand.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

D&I is becoming much more important as society and the workforce continues to see growth of women and people with disabilities, different ethnicities, faith groups, lifestyles and sexual orientation. The Office for Institutional Diversity at Boston College defines diversity and inclusion as:

“Diversity refers to the range of human differences that include the primary or internal dimension such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability and sexual orientation; and the secondary or external dimension such as thought styles, religion, nationality, socio-economic status, belief systems, military experience and education.

Inclusion involves the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of our diversity, where each person is valued, respected and supported for his or her distinctive skills, experiences and perspectives, to create a working and learning environment where everyone has an opportunity to experience personal fulfillment and participate fully in creating a successful and thriving Boston College. It is a means of creating value from the differences of all members of our community, in order to leverage talent and foster both individual and organizational excellence.” (Boston College, n.d.).

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While diversity is the ability to recognize individual and group differences, inclusion is a process to create an open work or living environment to welcome those differences, seeing them as valuable assets. Why is this important in today's business world? Lakshmi (2012) identifies six potential benefits of D&I: "New opportunities, products and services, Better teamwork, Better (corporate) image, Productive and effective workforce, Expansion of markets, Encourage employee participation" (p. 120, para. 6). These six benefits help lay the foundation for what can be described as Diversity Management. Lakshmi (2012) explains:

"Diversity Management is a strategy to promote the perception, acknowledgment and implementation of diversity in organizations and institutions...a comprehensive process for developing a professional work environment that suits all employees...inclusiveness is central and a key factor in Diversity Management" (p. 118, para. 1).

D&I strategy can be used to break down Diversity Management into actionable steps. It is a road map for creating an equal opportunity environment. The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) share a few suggestions on how to initiate strategy development:

- "1. Gather your diversity champions and strike a committee specifically for developing your D&I Strategy. Ask each person to take one section of the strategy development. Set a timeline for completion of different sections and completion of the entire strategy.
2. Don't create your strategy in a bubble. Seek input, feedback, or advice from different people in the organization – from different departments, functions, or lines of business.
3. Seek input from both supporters and detractors of diversity and inclusion. It may seem counterintuitive or discouraging to seek input from detractors, but if you identify ahead of

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time what their objections may be, you can incorporate approaches to mitigate the problems or roadblocks your D&I efforts may encounter” (Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion., 2014, p. 7).

Once D&I strategy has been created and implemented, measurement is the next pillar that will help with long-term success. It is important to identify how D&I strategy can help achieve business goals, whether it might be revenue generation or saving the organization money- identify tangible results. CCDI share valuable information on just this. Developed by Hubbard, six levels of impact and measurement should be integral to any D&I strategy and individual programs. These levels of evaluation include:

“Level 1: Reaction and Satisfaction – defines the way a diversity initiative is received by the stakeholders in the organization.

Level 2: Learning – defines specific skills and knowledge which stakeholders would be expected to gain as a result of the diversity initiative.

Level 3: Application and Implementation – defines the issues with regard to implementing new initiatives within the workplace.

Level 4: Business Impact – defines the specific business measures that are expected to change or improve as a result of the diversity initiative.

Level 5: Diversity Return on Investment (DROI) – defines the specific monetized return on the initiative, comparing the costs of the initiative to the benefits.

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Level 6: Intangibles – defines other “softer” related organizational effects that may surface as a result of the diversity initiative’s impact.” (Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion, 2013, p. 6).

This evaluation process is one that can help in delivering tangible and business impacts to any organization. By doing so, D&I can be positioned to be even more of a value-add and therefore an integral part of any business strategy.

4.2 Corporate Reputation

An organization’s reputation is often its most valuable asset. Gibson, Gonzales, and Castanon (2006) state that “Reputation is arguably the single most valued organizational asset” (as cited in Walker, 2010, p. 357, para. 1). To supplement this point, in a study conducted by Hall (1993), it was found that “...CEO’s consistently ranked corporate reputation as the most important key intangible resource” (as cited in Walker, 2010, p. 357, para. 1). A positive or negative reputation can be affected or influenced by many factors, and is the cumulative perception of the brand based on those factors. Walker (2012) defines corporate reputation as, “A relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects compared against some standard” (p. 370, para. 6).

At the heart of corporate reputation are employees. This is explained by Cravens and Oliver (2006) who state that, “Employees are the first step in the process to manage corporate reputation; after all, it is not possible to create a quality product or provide a quality service without the efforts of employees” (p. 294, para. 3). This lays the foundation for working towards a diverse and inclusive work environment so that employees can thrive within a culture that is accepting, open and progressive. According to a report by the Society for Human Resource

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Management (2015), the five most important aspects of job satisfaction as selected by a sample of 600 employees in the United States were: “Respectful treatment of all employees at all level, trust between employees and senior management, overall benefits, compensation/pay and job security” (p. 12). It can be argued that the first two aspects and the last one could be greatly influenced by a diverse and inclusive work environment. This further exemplifies the position of Lewellyn (2002) and Fombrun (1998) that organizational reputation is comprised of organizational identity and image. Identity stems from the beliefs and perceptions of internal stakeholders like employees and manager. Image is therefore built on the perception of external stakeholders such as customers, shareholders, competitors and the community (as cited in Walker, 2010, p.373). This suggests that internal harmony and acceptance, which can indeed be impacted by D&I, can have a direct effect on organizational identity. This organizational identity can also impact organizational image to some degree.

D&I can influence brand reputation, as suggested by Bohlmann, Harrison and Leong (2013):

“Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are recognized as C-suite issues with impact on reputation and brand, internally and externally. To maximize this impact, communicators must do a better job of understanding their organizations’ D&I strategy, and integrating it with communication strategy. This provides leadership opportunities for communicators” (p. 1, para. 1).

While D&I strategy is just one pillar that can influence corporate reputation and brand, it is one that should not be ignored as society and the workforce is becoming much more diverse. Brown & Waymer (2016) state that this influx of diversity is brought by millennials “...whom

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constitute the largest and most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the workplace today”

(p. 1). An effective D&I program must incorporate internal and external communication and most importantly, should be backed by aligned behaviour. From this we can understand how vital it is for senior leadership, mid-management and all employees to accept and believe in any D&I program, while exemplifying an appropriate set of attitudes.

Touching on evaluation once again, D&I can indeed help raise corporate reputation through tangible results. This can influence brand image, in turn impacting revenue and profit. Smith, Smith and Wang (2010) suggest three hypothesis that connect brand management, corporate reputation and market value: “Hypothesis 1: Firms with a positive brand image have higher market value of equity; Hypothesis 2: Firms with a positive brand image have superior financial performance; Hypothesis 3: Firms with a positive brand image are less risky” (p. 206). Lakshmi (2012) discuss how/why diversity is an asset and lists six ways in which it can enhance effectiveness. Of those six, we see that diversity can result in a ‘better image’, listed third. This allows us to infer that D&I strategy can impact organizational image, which can influence market value, financial performance and risk level of a firm.

4.3 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006) define CSR as, “situations where the firm goes beyond compliance and engages in actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law” (p. 4, para. 1). There are many CSR definitions, however the connecting piece being, to do more than what is required for the betterment of something other than the organization. These definitions suggest that CSR implementation can also be seen by incorporating elements into products or manufacturing, such

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as, using environmentally-friendly technologies, adopting progressive human resource management practices, reducing emissions and working with community organizations.

If decision-makers at any point consider the strategic/profit implications of CSR, if some level of CSR planning is done for healthy financial performance, is that perhaps navigating away from what is supposed to simply be ‘socially responsible’? If CSR actions are taking place and helping save the organization money, is this still acceptable? What if those same CSR actions are helping increase profit instead? This would mean that firms could then consider CSR planning, not because it might just be the right thing to do, rather, for financial gain. Similarly, if volunteering is the act of donating ones time without payment simply because it is the right thing to do, then being paid for that time nullifies the concept of volunteerism. McWilliams, Siegal & Wright (2006) state that, “If the motivation is to serve society, at the cost of profits, the action is socially responsible. However, if the motivation is to serve the bottom line, then the action is privately responsible...” (p. 7, para. 2). Interestingly, Fombrun and Shanley (1990) state that “..the returns to socially responsible behavior are captured through the reputation of the firm. An implication of this is that firms should consider CSR as an element of corporate strategy” (as cited in, McWilliams, Siegal & Wright, 2006, p.5, para. 3). This shows that above and beyond revenue or profit, firm reputation can be the payoff for CSR activities. As discussed earlier, a firm’s reputation is also referred to as one of the most valuable, intangible assets of an organization.

While measurement is key in understanding impact, longevity or resource allocation for programs or initiatives, focusing too much on financial gain in the realm of CSR, might harm such a socially responsible strategy. One point of view is that, as long as a firm’s financial performance is not negatively being impacted by any CSR initiative, it could be considered a

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success. Let us keep in mind that a competitive advantage over CSR activities is hard to maintain and soon enough, basing it solely on financial gain, may not be logical. Reinhardt (1998) states that, “a firm engaging in a CSR-based strategy could only sustain an abnormal return if it could prevent competitors from imitating its strategy” (as cited in McWilliams, Siegal & Wright, 2006, p. 6, para. 2). Considering that competitors can very easily mimic or conduct similar CSR tactics, it would not be wise to place a significant amount of weight on socially responsible actions as a revenue generation tactic, rather the above mentioned firm reputation as the ultimate CSR payoff.

Because CSR has a direct impact on corporate reputation, Fombrun and Shanely (1990) discuss how stakeholders judge firm's on their “noneconomic agendas” (p. 239). These agendas can show how corporations are working with the community in which they reside. “Managers presume that social responsiveness generates goodwill from employees, consumers and other publics that enhances the long-run profitability and viability of firms and protects their own employment” (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990, p. 239, para. 4). Thus, even if D&I is deemed part of CSR strategy, it can help increase a firm's image.

4.4 Communication's Theories and D&I

Situational Theory states that audiences surround themselves or resonate with messages similar to their own attitudes, behaviours and norms. Grunig (2013) state that, “Recipients of messages were most likely to accept messages that were consonant with their attitudes...he theory explains that people were likely to selectively expose themselves to messages that supported their attitudes” (p.4, para. 4). As it relates to D&I, this theory is very applicable in that, those who resonate with and have some connection to diversity, acceptance, fair treatment

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or inclusive practices and policies, will likely be accepting and supportive of D&I. The assumed goal for every organization is to have all internal stakeholders value D&I enough so that proper planning and implementation can occur. Aligning D&I planning to communications objectives would be a smart choice considering it is the communications function that typically is responsible for and manages most, if not all, important stakeholder relationships. In addition, particular communications theories can help give D&I more traction or at least offer additional support as to why it is a very important pillar in the business world of 2016.

Taking this theory one step further, it would be wise for organizations to assess how much its internal stakeholders are connected to the notion of D&I. This would likely happen in the form of a survey tool, informational group interviews, question and answer sessions or a myriad of other two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical avenues. This two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical conversation would simply be for the purpose of gathering information from the workforce, to better understand their views and opinions. These two models make up half of which is the Four Models of Public Relations in which Press Agency and Public Information models are the first frameworks, which focus on one-way communication. “The four models of public relations occupy a critical place in the theory of excellence. In fact, the models of public relations were so essential to the concept of excellence that many scholars essentially have equated the entire Excellence theory with the two-way symmetrical model” (Laskin, 2009, p.6).

Grunig (1992) states that two-way-asymmetrical model, “...uses research to develop messages that are most likely to persuade strategic publics to behave as the organization wants” (p.18, para. 4). Grunig (1992) also states that two-way symmetrical model “...is based on research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with strategic publics” (p.18, para. 5). These two models would allow an organization to receive feedback from

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its internal audience to better understand behaviour, likes and dislikes, so that strategic and targeted messaging, policies or practices can be updated that resonate with that group. Whether managing internal or external communications, “...excellent departments generally practice a mixture of the two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models – a mixed-motive model – although their practice is more symmetrical than asymmetrical” (Grunig, 1992, p.19). Due to this level of thinking and dialogue considerations by communications professionals, D&I planning would benefit greatly if either directly tied to, or strongly supported by the communications function or Chief Communications Officer.

Another important point of view is the Co-creational Perspective, in which audiences are viewed as ‘partners’ where they, with the organization, create and develop meaning for a particular message, policy, strategy or campaign. Botan and Taylor (2014) state that, “In the co-creational perspective, publics are not just a means to an end. Publics are not instrumentalized but instead are partners in the meaning-making process” (p.652). Relationship building is a strong focus in this framework which is a long-term process built through ongoing conversation and trust. Progressing D&I in any organization can be done with the workforce collectively by leveraging learnings from the Co-creational Perspective. When done effectively, the workforce would likely resonate with implementation more, as they were involved in idea generation, planning and strategy development. There would need to be some parameters around how much involvement is needed and required by internal stakeholders, before conversations become too large and too many to effectively manage.

4.5 Communications Leadership

Due to the close connection that has been shown between communications theories and managing D&I, it would only make sense for the communications function to either own or have an active and influential voice with D&I strategy. There are many transferable theories, perspectives, strategies that can be applied to D&I which communications has been practicing and implementing.

Ravazzani (2006) shares three communications issues when having a dialogue with stakeholders:

- “Communicating for diversity, considered a value in itself to be communicated as a permanent aspect of organizational policy (the ‘why’ of communicating);
- Communicating with diversity, in all its features, interacting differently with increasingly diverse interlocutors (with ‘whom’ one communicates);
- Communicating in diversity, adopting and reviewing all available methods, channels and tools to ensure the effectiveness of communication processes and recognising the fluid and changing environment in which today’s organizations perform (the ‘how to’ communicate)” (p. 3)

These represent external communication, however, they can still be used for an internal approach. Re-focusing communications in this on the workforce in this way could very well shed light on how to manage internal D&I conversations and furthermore, how to progress D&I strategy.

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Those managing the communications function, like a CCO, are becoming more integral to the decision-making process and part of the inner c-suite circle. As reported by Arthur Page Society (2013), “More CCOs report directly to their CEO...the communications portfolio of many companies has become a crucial factor in decision making at every level” (p. 6). Considering it is the communications function that typically manages all internal and external relationship, and since stakeholder communication is more important and vital than ever before, logically the CCO should indeed have a seat at the leadership table. Since stakeholder management can have major impacts and influences on business and performance activity, a skilled communicator is needed at the strategic level.

The Arthur Page Society (2013) report also shares that, “As the global communications environment has changed, so have CEOs’ expectations for what their own communications team can contribute” (p. 10). Of the many expectations listed, “strong focus on internal communications” and “global perspective” are the most relevant to our D&I discussion. Kalla (2005) defines internal communications as, “all formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organisation.” (as cited in, Jackson & Welch, 2007, p. 182). Considering that D&I impacts internal stakeholders, aligning it with an existing internal communications strategy would make the most sense. In addition, CCO’s are required to have a global perspective; working with and in different cultures and languages. The same thought process can be applied internally, considering the diversity within most organizations today.

There are many correlations and applicable strategies that link D&I and internal communications. Because of this it should be aligned with the communications functions and/or the CCO’s objectives.

4.6 Organizational Leadership

Leadership can be defined in many ways. Bill Gates suggests that, “As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.” (Kruse, 2013, para. 9). This simple explanation takes into account the empowerment of others, perhaps a team, a department or an organization. However, an overall goal, objective or vision is needed – the purpose of and the reason for empowering a group of people. Bass (1990) shares an organizational behaviour-related definition that is more complex and inclusive:

“Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involved structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change-persons whose acts affect other people more than other people’s acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group.” (p.19).

We see that the definition presented by Bass references a group (team, department or organization) and also includes some level of goal/objective. To modify motivation or competencies would be to help achieve a new objective or goal, which also raises the topic of ‘change’. Leadership must be comfortable with change and as Bass states, are in fact, agents of change. Again, with the many definitions that exist, two are only presented to highlight a high-level understanding of what leadership is. In addition, it is also important to note the qualities that leaders possess that helps them be strong and successful commanders. House and Aditya (1997) state that charismatic leaders possess the following attributes:

- “The ability to lead organizations to attain outstanding accomplishments;

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- The ability to achieve extraordinary levels of follower motivation, admiration, respect, trust, commitment, dedication, loyalty, and performance;
- The ability to stress symbolic and emotionally appealing leader behaviour such as vision, framing, image building, and environmental sensitivity; and,
- The ability to effect self-esteem, motivate arousal and emotions and identification with the leader's vision and values" (as cited in Flynn, 2002, p.10).

If leadership is supportive of any D&I strategy and implementation, it is highly likely that the entire organization would also be. However, if leadership is itself diverse and is part of the D&I conversation at the leadership table, then a D&I strategy, program or plan can gain that much more traction it needs to become part of the organization's culture and a structural pillar. Leadership by example is very key in this context. A diverse and inclusive leadership team speaks volumes, even without any words spoken. When D&I can be seen from the top of the organization down, and across all departments, teams and groups, the work culture is that much richer, experiences are that much more valuable and an equal work environment is that much more accepting and open.

5. Research Design/Method

Two methods of data collection were used to explore and measure various elements of D&I: Content Analysis and In-Depth Interviews. These two methods along with a literature review were conducted to gather multiple fact points to show how and why D&I can impact corporate reputation, communications strategy and CSR. The in-depth interview questions and process was reviewed and approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB). See Appendix E for the certificate of ethics clearance.

5.1 Content Analysis

This was conducted by referring to Glassdoor's 2016 Employee Choice Awards, Best Places to Work on glassdoor.com. From the Employee Choice Awards list, 15 organizations were selected for content analysis. "Glassdoor holds a growing database of millions of company reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interview reviews and questions, benefits reviews, office photos and more...add to that millions of the latest jobs..." (Glassdoor, n.d.). Two specific areas of each organization's website were analyzed: 'About Us' and 'Careers'. These 15 organizations were selected to ensure a mix of companies across varying industries.

Weber (1990) describes content analysis as "classifying textual material, reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data" (p. 5). Part of the concern with content analysis is selecting appropriate key words or phrases and ensuring that the researcher's interpretation of the word(s) is the same as the content that is being measured. Therefore a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis was performed. Analysis included secondary and tertiary webpages under the main About Us and Careers section. Each section was measured on: 1) 'diversity' and 'inclusion' mentions and related key words, 2) 'equality' or 'equity' mentions and related key words, and 3) D&I/Equal opportunity-related visuals. Amongst each of these three categories, there was an opportunity to document examples/explanations, which helped capture qualitative data. This was done to account for D&I related words, descriptions or examples on the actual webpages. Every reference to 'diversity' or 'inclusion, 'diversity and inclusion', 'equality' or 'equity' were examined. See Appendix C for more details on scoring and results.

This form of analysis was conducted to better understand what certain organizations have to share about D&I on their websites, how it is positioned and how many layers of webpages a

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reader must visit before reaching D&I-related material. The list of organizations was then cross-referenced with three other top employer lists to better understand why each might/might not have a strong D&I web presence. These additional lists include: “2016 Canada's Top 100 Employers”, “2016 Canada's Best Diversity Employers and “2016 America's Best Employers”. It was interesting to compare and contrast each list with the results of the content analysis. The cross-referenced analysis of additional lists is presented in Appendix D.

5.2 In-depth Interviews

Interviews were used as another data collection method as it provided an opportunity to solicit qualitative and experiential data. Boyce and Neale (2006) state that “In-depth interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person’s thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth...The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys.” (p. 3, para. 2).

Data was collected from senior leaders in varying industries. An attempt was made to solicit representation from senior level executives which included Chief Communications Officers, Chief Diversity Officers, Chief Executive Officers, Presidents and Vice Presidents. Additionally, other qualified senior management were sought after resulting in a total of 12 interviews. Industries/sectors that were represented included: non-profit, financial, government, professional services/consulting, healthcare, airline, police and automotive. Participant recruitment was conducted through the researcher’s personal and professional network. A request was made to specific individuals in that network to participate in the interviews. In addition, an attempt was made to contact senior leaders not in the researcher’s network, but self-

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identified in business or trade media, or on their respective organization's websites, as having involvement in diversity and inclusion programs or issues. Interviews were conducted over the phone and the same 15 questions were asked of each participant with no deviation. This was to ensure that all answers from all interviews were not influenced in any way by the researcher. In addition, only a handful of questions were shared with each interviewee prior to the actual conversation, which was audio recorded and lasted between 30-45 minutes. See Appendix A for a list of all interview questions. See Appendix B for details on interview candidates.

6. Results

6.1 In-Depth Interviews

This section will summarize the data collected through all 12 interviews. All candidates were Canadian and located in Ontario representing various industries. Proceeding results have been categorized based on the three areas of measure of D&I, which is also how questions were arranged. These three areas include *Corporate Reputation*, *Communications Strategy* and *CSR*.

6.1.1 Corporate Reputation

When initially asking candidates what comes to mind when they hear the terms Diversity and Inclusion, all stated very similar response. Many participants suggested that D&I is about: embracing differences that make us all unique which we bring to our jobs and the country; having diversity of thought brought about by age, gender, industry experience, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disabilities; our staff should reflect our clients who in turn reflect our country.

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The head of diversity and inclusion for a national financial institution stated that when thinking of D&I, what comes to mind is “An inclusive workforce that reflects the marketplace in which we serve, operate and live. It’s about embracing cultural nuances that can be used to help achieve business goals”. When asked to define diversity and then inclusion, participants carefully crafted their responses. From all 12 individuals, an overarching definition of these two terms has been created. Diversity is a representation of the mix of explicit and implicit differences amongst a group of people (the workforce) that reflects the community being served or in which organizations operates in, which can then bring forward diversity of thought. Inclusion is how to ensure that a mix of unique individuals feel accepted, respected and are treated fairly to work side-by-side so that diversity of thought can be harnessed to then help achieve business goals. Simply put, diversity is the ‘what’ and inclusion is the ‘how’.

There are many ways that the organizations studied are incorporating and implementing D&I programs. Interestingly, the few D&I consultancies that participated in the interviews, collectively shared that organizations range from “bare bones compliance” to “deeply embracing D&I concepts and strategy, and implementing leadership, development and/or mentoring programs”, as shared by one CEO. In addition, these consultancies shared that some industries and organizations are doing a better job than others in the level of importance given to D&I strategy and implementation. One CEO of a consultancy shared some typical questions that organizations should ask themselves when considering any D&I program: “What does the workforce think about the current work culture? What does the workforce think about senior executives? How is the workforce treated? Do they think policies are fair, or support all individuals equally across recruitment, evaluation, promotion and compensation?” The same CEO stressed the importance of understanding the current situation, setting targets/goals with

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associated time frames and then developing a work-back schedule that highlights the strategies and tactics that need to be created now, for future goals to be achieved.

Other participants that spoke about the organizations they work for shared, to varying degrees of detail, their D&I programs. For some, this includes just catching up to speed with D&I strategy and implementation, and initiating either high-level internal conversations or implementing smaller and manageable tactics. For those that have a more robust strategy and implementation plan, program elements seem to be woven into the culture of the organization. For one particular national financial institution, their top D&I priority groups are the representation of women in senior leadership roles, recruitment of aboriginal professionals and recruitment of persons with disabilities. The head of D&I for this financial institution shared that their objective is to “understand the nuances and savviness of having these individuals in the workforce so that we can recruit, retain and advance.”

The director of communications that supports the D&I function at a different national financial institution shared much insight into their strategy and program elements: “The Diversity Leadership Council which is made up of senior executives and the CEO who chairs the council, oversees D&I strategy. This is because we need visible leadership to be involved”. In addition, it was shared that there are many employee resources groups that represent much of the diverse workforce, with as many as 17,000 employees as members to at least one of these groups. From these groups, many specific initiatives and programs are created. Lastly, it was stated that the Global Diversity Team for this particular financial institution manages many more program elements like e-learning programs, diversity progress reports and a D&I 5-year blue print.

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Interestingly, the use of employee resource groups was mentioned by a handful of participants, mainly from national or multi-national organizations. In addition, other program elements include: D&I training, workshops and presentations; visits to various religious/cultural centres to speak with members of that Gurdwara, Church, Temple or Mosque; multi-faith community advisory committees; regular attendance at various community events; collecting data and demographics of the community and patients that assist in strategy development; and, establishing relationships with key external partners to ensure a continuum of care for patients that leave the hospital, to prevent feelings of isolation or loneliness.

Leveraging D&I programs to enhance recruiting practices, brand awareness or product/service delivery can help organizations in achieving a significant competitive advantage. According to the consultancies interviewed, most of Corporate Canada is not leveraging D&I to enhance the three goals mentioned, either due to not recognizing D&I as a competitive advantage or not strategically thinking about how D&I can help enhance business strategy. One CEO stated that "...there is a lack of knowledge about how our population is changing. Leveraging these three areas is not being talked about, mainly because people don't know that there's anything to leverage at all". Another CEO stated that organizations that operate in the B2C space tend to be more committed than organizations that have a B2B audience, since there is direct contact with the Canadian population. An example was provided that national banks would be more committed to D&I as oppose to law firms. The third CEO explained how 'best in class' organizations are those that can connect all three areas of recruitment, brand awareness and product/service delivery through D&I if needed. An example was provided about one particular multi-national potato chip manufacturer that wanted to target a specific flavoured chip to one particular ethnic group. To do this successfully, testing was conducted on an employee resource

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group of that ethnicity, feedback on taste and packaging was provided and acted on, resulting in an extremely successful product launch. As it stands, the parent company of this particular potato chip manufacturer regularly tests new products with its employee recourse groups. “It’s about recognizing the access to great talent, who is representative of the customers to be served,” shared the CEO of this particular D&I consultancy.

Other participants shared that as they are beginning their D&I strategy or implementation, great lessons are being learned from areas within their organizations that might have been doing similar work. In addition, the three areas of recruitment, brand awareness and product/service delivery are very much connected in that “we want to be known as an employer of choice, recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce which leads us to better service delivery in the various communities we operate in,” says a senior director of a global professional services firm. There seemed to be a common sentiment that D&I is indeed being leveraged to enhance these three areas with one participant explaining further about the recruiting process in that, “Candidates need to also self-identify, when asked during the initial application/screening process, as being a part of any groups listed in that application or having knowledge of a second language so that they can be considered for those positions,” says a diversity manager of a Canadian airline.

For a global technology and computer software/hardware organization, the senior human resources manager shared that, “D&I is considered even in our marketing campaigns. One particular campaign in 2015 centered around transgendered youth, which focused on one particular youth and her journey. This then translated and led to additional community/public affairs work which we supported, highlighting that youth and her family. From there, the youth and her family were also recognized during the Vancouver WE day.” WE Day is a celebration of

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youth making a difference in their local and global communities. WE Schools is the yearlong program that nurtures compassion in young people and gives them the tools to create transformational social change. (WE, n.d.).

While some organizations might be concerned with corporate reputation from various stakeholders perspective, the director of communications that supports the D&I function at a national financial institution stated that, “This is hard to measure. It’s not so much about maintaining a reputation as it is about doing what’s right and what’s smart. We know that stakeholders’ point of view is important but when we’re doing the right thing, that (positive) reputation will follow.” Other sentiments included the fact that corporate reputation is based on consistency and having behaviour and attitude match any internal or external messaging – walk the walk and talk the talk. In addition, it was stated that various stakeholders are likely to value D&I for different reasons, which ultimately can impact corporate reputation as a by-product. For example, “When working with clients, we need to have a diverse team. Our people need to look like our clients and like the country we live in,” says a senior director of a global professional services firm.

For some participants, it is important to stay connected with the community as a key stakeholder, through community engagement opportunities, as shared by a regional director of health equity and inclusion of a healthcare provider and facility, “We regularly visit community organizations, with our CEO and senior leadership, to provide services to marginalized populations.” This opportunity allows for direct feedback, which has been positive in respect to health equity and inclusion. In addition, a senior hr manager for global technology and computer software/hardware organization shared an example of how a customer’s/consumer’s point of view can carry a lot of weight. At an event in the United States, sponsored and organized by the

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organization, for key stakeholders including consumers, female go-go dancers were hired who were positioned throughout the venue to dance (provocatively). Female attendees were offended by this and began socializing their opinions online. “This became a huge deal and we publically apologized. After this incident we also changed some of our policies and procedure to ensure something like this would not happen again. Sometimes mistakes do happen, and they can be critical to your reputation,” stated the senior hr manager.

On the other side, the consultancies shared slightly opposing views based on their experience across several industries. One particular CEO shared that, “...for recruitment, candidates might apply if they hear that an organization is more inclusive.” This is in line with several other views on recruitment practices. Another CEO of a different D&I consultancy shared that D&I typically does not have a major impact, in general, across major stakeholder groups, however this can vary from one community to the next. It was also mentioned that negative news tends to have a much stronger impact, on stakeholders, than positive. A story was shared about a CEO of a very large retail chain in the United States who had made a large donation to a particular candidate during an election period, whose party was against same-sex marriage. This in turn angered the LGBT community who rallied together to boycott the retail chain, which also trickled into Canada for a longer period of time. This particular community represents almost \$700B worth of business in the United States, impacting the retailer’s profits and corporate reputation. The CEO decided to apologize and then made an effort to invest in LGBT groups.

Of the three groups, board of directors, senior leadership team and front line staff, participants shared varying opinions on how D&I amongst these three can impact corporate reputation. One particular stand-out response was from a CEO of a D&I consultancy. She shares,

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“The most important is senior leadership. These are the people that have the biggest impact on organization culture. Board of Directors aren’t in the ‘trenches’ and most Canadians don’t know who is on the BOD (of large public organizations).” Another CEO of a different consultancy shared that the front line is usually the most diverse, with less diversity as there is upward movement in the organization. However, he also shared, “BOD and senior leadership have more impact than front line staff, but interestingly when looking at BOD and senior leadership on particular websites, we see very little diversity. This makes you think at little.” Most other responses centred around how important it is for there to be diversity amongst all three levels and that diversity amongst all three levels is not always easily achieved. One of the key advantages for internal stakeholders is that, “Having senior leaders that are diverse can be encouraging for other employees, to see someone similar to themselves in higher level positions. These diverse leaders can act as role models. Employees want to see people like themselves in higher positions,” stated the senior hr manager of a global technology and computer software/hardware organization

6.1.2 Communications Strategy

All participants shared that the Communications function or the Chief Communications Officer is responsible for developing and nurturing relationships with stakeholders. For some organizations, Communications plays such an important role that it is often involved in overall business strategy conversations. The communications lead of a global technology and computer software/hardware organization is part of the senior leadership team. “It’s important that our CCO is part of the leadership team so that she knows how Canadian operations works. She needs to be able to understand our business strategy. Part of our business strategy is D&I and our CCO also participates in our D&I Council,” shared the senior hr lead. Inversely, the director of

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marketing and communications for a local/regional municipality stated that communications has some responsibility for developing and nurturing relationships with stakeholders but is not entirely responsible or absolutely every relationship or stakeholder.

Similarly, a CEO from a consultancy explained that while communications plays an important role to provide guidance and counsel on how to communicate with stakeholder groups, they are not responsible for interacting with all stakeholders all the time. She further suggests, “Marketing can also have/does have responsibilities to develop relationships with customers to grow the business. For employees, it’s HR that has the strong connection with internal stakeholders.”

According to all participants D&I should be tied to the communications or CCO’s goals in some way. For some participants, this connection should be formal and explicit, with D&I either being part of the communications portfolio or D&I having formal communications support. One particular CEO of a consultancy explains her opposite point of view, “Communications makes it sounds like everything is working well, but when you take a closer look, it’s the same – racism, bias and sexism. Communications is doing their job, sometimes making the organization sound and look better than it actually is.” Another CEO of a consultancy explained his perspective in that his team offers a communications toolkit to each corporate client that they work with, which includes elements such as copies/samples of emails to be sent, and a roll-out schedule (when and to whom they should be sent communications). He also mentions that clients that use this toolkit are typically successful in their D&I implementation. Other sentiments included that D&I should not only be connected to the communications function, but to all other areas, if it is indeed determined to be a core value. Unfortunately, if D&I is not deemed a core value, “it is usually a line item amongst many objectives, which is

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reflected and shows when there isn't a senior officer assigned to D&I", explains the head of D&I at a national financial institution.

In the case of a healthcare provider and facility, the regional director of health equity and inclusion explained that, "In our case, they have to be tied – D&I is in the CCO's portfolio. Even if this wasn't the case, there would still need to be a strong connection. Our external reputation and credibility wouldn't be as strong and successfully managed if not tied with the communications portfolio." That connection can occur much easily and that tie-in between communications and D&I allows for messaging to be included in various communications pieces. "For our communications lead, it's important that messaging be aligned with D&I because it has a big impact on various stakeholders and communities. Messaging needs to be woven into all communications collateral and it's important that this happens for the president for the various speeches and presentations that are often scheduled," shared the communications lead of a global technology and computer software/hardware organization.

All participants agree that there should be alignment between D&I strategy and corporate/organizational goals, however this might not always happen. "If there is a need to hire aboriginal professionals but the organizations is talking about layoffs, there is misalignment. D&I should layer over the top of what the organization does. If a strategic goal is to develop new business opportunities then the D&I implication should be to leverage the workforce's diversity to help identify new opportunities," says one CEO of a consultancy. A number of participants explained that if senior leadership is involved in developing D&I strategy, it would in turn help with alignment to organizational goals. A senior human resources manager at a global technology and computer software/hardware organization explains that, "We have a global D&I strategy, created by the global senior executive team, so that that it's aligned with business

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strategy. We then have our global D&I team that takes this strategy to roll it down into all areas of the organization, which is then localized to each region's needs." In addition, another interesting response was shared by the head of D&I of a national financial institution, who stated that, "On our CEO's scorecard, there is a line item about D&I. Since it's on the CEO's scorecard, it's on every executive's scorecard. This allows D&I to get support and attention from senior leadership team."

All participants agreed that D&I is practiced differently when it is part of an organization's culture versus just being a functional tactic. A senior director of a global professional services firm stated that when D&I is part of workplace culture, it is part of the DNA of that organization. "D&I is truly effective when it's part of day-to-day operations and embedded in the culture. Messaging needs to be consistent and the value of D&I, for our organization around the world, then also becomes the same. It's just as important in each country that we operate in." A diversity manager of a Canadian airline shares insight about D&I just being a functional tactic by explaining that in previous years/many years ago, D&I was just about compliance – something that organization's just had to do. Now there is more attention on understanding the value of it, which fuels why D&I should be practiced. "When you understand the value, it becomes part of the culture. It can take years for D&I to be infused in all functions of an organization. It has changed us for the better once we understood the value and impact it can bring," she explains further. Representatives from a leading automobile manufacturer also share that D&I strategy can't be a cookie cutter fix. "We've worked hard to get a deeper understanding of D&I and how it can apply and be implemented in our plant in Canada and in other countries," explains the communications manager.

6.1.3 Corporate Social Responsibility

While D&I and communications was the central focus of this study, a discussion about CSR was warranted. On whether organizations should be concerned with leaving a positive imprint in the communities they operate/conduct business in, all participants agreed. The director of marketing and communications for a local/regional municipality shared that not only should organizations be concerned with their community and environmental footprint but in the case of government, representatives are voted in. If community members are not happy with decisions that leaders are making, they have a voice and an opportunity to potentially change regional councillors – the power is in the hands of the community. For other/private organizations, such is not the case. From a social justice point of view, “it’s the right thing to do”, as stated by the regional director of health equity and inclusion of a healthcare provider and facility. She also shares that organizations have much power and that they can bring about great change in the communities they’re in. Taking this one step further, it’s the right thing and smart thing for organizations to do. A senior human resources manager at a global technology and computer software/hardware organization explains additional/business reasons why organizations should be concerned. “Think about the buying power of various consumer groups. Organizations should be concerned because people will speak with their dollars. There are so many competitors these days that if organizations are to leave a negative imprint, customers can easily purchase elsewhere.”

In terms of the main focus of this research, there is much impact that D&I can have on the local community. The community support and diversity relations officer for a local GTA police service shares that the impact that D&I can bring is one of great harmony, understanding and therefore greater acceptance. This in turn can assist in communities becoming safer which

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can aid any police service in their prime directive – to serve and protect. When there is greater acceptance, community members feel more comfortable being themselves. This can include wearing and embracing cultural, religious or traditional attire/dress within the community, as shared by the director of marketing and communications for a local/regional municipality. From a business perspective, a communications manager of a leading automobile manufacturer stated that the demographic in the community that they operate in is constantly shifting with multiple higher education facilities in the same town. Because of this, many students tend to work at this particular plant. Even those that don't, if they appreciate the community they are temporarily residing in, they may choose to relocate permanently which would then benefit the organization with newly skilled professionals.

Looking at this from another perspective, a CEO of a consultancy shared that investing in community initiatives can be more robust and diverse if decision makers are themselves diverse. “If Canadian-born men and women are making community engagement decisions, perhaps there might be investment in local kids hockey or breast cancer – both great causes. But if there are people of different ethnicities involved in these decisions, community involvement could also include various ethnic groups, charities, fundraisers and much more.” The key is to have a diversified community engagement plan. An example was provided about a Canadian-based oil and gas energy company that has an aboriginal person on their board, which in turn results in more attention given to aboriginal rights and concerns. “This company understands the impact of having a diverse management team,” she explained.

CSR can be a very large strategic goal but having some connection to D&I could offer additional value. A handful of participants shared that while D&I can be included within CSR, perhaps a line item, it still deserves its own place amongst key business strategies. Comments

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included, “It should be in CSR, but needs its own place”, “D&I is part of CSR but it’s also a stand-alone area” and “it’s just an element of CSR”, all stated from CEOs of different consultancies. Representatives from both national financial institutions shared that there is a strong link between D&I and CSR with either informal or formal connections in place for both areas to be supported. The director of health equity and inclusion of a healthcare provider and facility feels that D&I and CSR should also be aligned but further explains that if there was focus only on the core business, this would not sit well with the community or society in general. “In addition to D&I, CSR can help us see what we do and how it impacts the population we serve”, she states. It was also discussed why alignment needs to occur. A senior human resources manager at a global technology and computer software/hardware organization said that without alignment between D&I and CSR organizational leaders and departments would be doing their own thing and making much less of an impact. “We’re not as segregated to and in our communities as much as we used to be. It’s even more important now to be aligned considering where communities and society is heading in general,” she explains. Without alignment, there is often little internal communications which can then be seen in products and services.

When speaking about organizations taking public policy/support positions with external D&I issues, many participants responded strongly that this should happen. Others mentioned that it depends on the issue and how it might impact the organization. One CEO of a consultancy stated that for-profit organizations can have a big influence if showing public support, however it is understood that some might be apprehensive because it could be seen as lobbying. However, if this support is managed correctly, it could benefit the organization in terms of goodwill earned and more importantly, can bring about positive change.

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Representatives from both national financial institutions had interestingly different perspectives. The director of communications that supports the D&I function at one financial institution shared that, by organizations taking interest in showing public support it helps position them as a leader – willing to be vocal and visible about a particular issue. Meanwhile, the head of D&I of another national financial institution stated that organizations don't necessarily have to get publically involved. By leveraging the corporate programs that this particular corporation has invested in, they can impact and influence positive change through hiring, promotions, recruitment and more. "We can make our statement through these activities," he states. Similarly, the community support and diversity relations officer for a local GTA police service states that there is a strong difference between being supportive of an issue or culture versus taking an active/public support position. "The latter could spark a fear (or concern) of aligning with a group and their particular issues, which could have a counter-effect with/on other groups," he explained.

Reviewing another, yet connected, point of view, a diversity manager of a Canadian airline shares that if an issue is strongly and directly connected to the customers/clients of an organization, then perhaps involvement in public support might be warranted. In addition, she mentioned that it's best to stay away from political issues. Circling back to the other end of the spectrum, a senior human resources manager at a global technology and computer software/hardware organization passionately stated that the organization that she works for does indeed publically support certain issues. "We have publically supported gay rights in countries around the world. We employ many people in many different countries and we can leverage our reputation and weight when standing up for an issue. We have validity, clout and influence which we can use to stand up for D&I or other related issues," she explained.

6.2 Content Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the websites analyzed were selected from Glassdoor's 2016 Employee Choice Awards best companies. 15 companies of varying industries were selected, however there was also value in examining companies in the same/similar competitive space. Glassdoor's Employee Choice Awards does not necessarily look at the impact of D&I, therefore it was understood that selection from this list was unbiased and fair. Of the 15 websites analyzed, the top four will be highlighted. After using a cumulative score we see that each of the top four websites rank as follows: Ericsson 97%, Salesforce 83%, Apple 80%, RBC 80%. This cumulative score represents content/webpages that were analyzed for D&I copy and references, 'equal/equity' copy and references and D&I-related images. Specifically, it measures to what degree diversity, inclusion and equity was represented as text/copy and visual aids throughout the About Us and Careers section.

As seen with Ericsson, Salesforce, Apple and RBC, each has several dedicated webpages reserved for D&I and related information. These specific pages can be accessed from the 'Careers' or 'About Us' sections. An attempt is made below to highlight only key and unique elements of each company's analyzed content to provide a general and wide set of observations to show the many ways that D&I can be represented and discussed online. As mentioned earlier, the number of occurrences of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' copy, 'equal/equity' copy and D&I related images were counted. Alongside, examples and explanations were also captured to account for D&I related verbiage that might have helped contribute to the overall quality of information on a particular page. Content was analyzed by using a scale/top score of 5: 1 = no representation of keywords, 2 = poor representation of keywords, 3 = average representation of key words, 4 = good representation of key words, and 5 = strong representation of key words.

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The About Us, Careers and D&I Images categories were assigned scores out of 5 based on how many keyword mentions and images were included on each of the pages. Out of a possible score of 30, totals were added and a percentage score was calculated for easier comparison. Results of the content analysis exercise are summarized in Appendix C.

Data gathered through this research method provides supplemental evidence to help answer the very first research question: How and to what extent, does diversity and inclusion impact corporate reputation? We can see a glimpse of this from the top four organizations, who are also included in other ‘top employer’ lists, as seen in Appendix D, as mentioned earlier in the paper. Of all four top employers, all are included in at least one other ‘top employers’ list, with the exception of RBC, which happens to be included in two additional lists. It can be argued that D&I can indeed play a role in corporate reputation and with website content. While other companies analyzed that did not rank high are also included in other ‘top employer’ lists, this will be discussed in the following “Results Analysis” section.

The initial focus for Apple seems to be on select employees, showcasing diversity through real life examples highlighting employee education and professional backgrounds. There are also a number of D&I statistics directly on the main D&I page such as demographics of new hires, hiring trends for 2013-2016, different ethnicities that make up the workforce along with additional global and US-centered statistics. This is supplemented with multiple images of ethnic individuals and written content. In addition, the ‘Careers’ webpage includes much D&I and ‘equal/equity’ and related verbiage such as, “It’s the diversity of those people and their ideas that inspires the innovation that runs through everything we do” and “At Apple, we believe inclusion inspires innovation.” (Apple, n.d.). As with the specific D&I webpages, there is fair representation with D&I related images of diverse-looking professionals.

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As seen with Salesforce, they showcase their diverse workforce with a prominently placed set of graphs that highlights their staff by gender and also by ethnicity. This is supplemented with a direct link to a blog post titled, “Working Toward a More Diverse Salesforce Future”. This blog post highlights three opportunities that Salesforce is working towards: equal pay, equal advancement and equal opportunity. In addition, another link provides access to a separate webpage that discusses more about various employee resource groups such as: Femmeforce, Outforce, Vetforce, Boldforce, Latinoforce, and more.

Ericsson highlights four specific groups for which they have a main focus for: gender equality, nationality & ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability. From the gender equality section, Ericsson shares, “31 percent of the Executive Leadership Team members were women in 2015, a substantial increase over the past five years.” (Ericsson, n.d.b). In addition, this specific page shares the companies “Gender Ambition for 2020” along with graphs and tables highlighting employees by age and gender. Additional pages highlight D&I programs and initiatives, awards and recognition, employee resources groups and supplier diversity. Some key initiatives that Ericsson discuss also include Diversity Awareness Month, International Women’s Day, World Day for Cultural Diversity, Girls in ICT Day. Lastly, one particular point of interest is a video by CEO Hans Vestberg on how diversity encourages innovation. He mentions briefly that currently the global workforce is 22% female which they plan to increase to 30% as part of their 2020 goal.

“Diversity and growth are not just integrated, but inseparable. This belief is at the heart of RBC’s Value of “Diversity & Inclusion - We embrace diversity for innovation and growth,” states Dave McKay, president & CEO, RBC, (McKay, n.d.). RBC is recognized as one of Canada’s Best Diversity Employers for 2016 (Canada’s Best Diversity Employers, n.d.). As a

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result, we see RBC discuss topics such as why diversity is important, what has been learned, D&I reports, awards and recognition, and research conducted. The most recent RBC-sponsored report is titled “Outsmarting our brains: Overcoming hidden biases to harness diversity's true potential,” released November 2013. (RBC, 2013). In addition there appears to be a static side menu bar that provides access to the companies “Diversity & Inclusion Blueprint 2020” report along with access to a “2012 - 2015 Diversity Blueprint Report Card”.

The remaining 11 websites analyzed had much less keywords and images, some with almost no imagery or content at all about D&I or related references. This might be a result of where a particular organization operates from (location) and the customers/clients they serve, the particular industry a company is within or corporate values and mission that may not consider D&I important. In addition, corporate values and mission may just not consider D&I as areas that require being called out specifically. Let us also keep in mind that this content analysis only reflects part of the research. Additional data collection methods provide the opportunity to examine this research topic with a wider lens.

7. Discussion & Analysis

All participants involved in the interviews shared how valuable this research is. They were extremely excited to be involved in these important conversations and applauded the work being done. Interview participants thought that the questions were well-thought of and positioned well to help generate key conversation points.

Content analysis was also a valuable exercise, to understand how organizations refer to or acknowledge D&I on their websites, which is open to the public to see. This allowed the researcher to better understand how much importance and value is placed on external D&I

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communications. Only external website content was analyzed, not internal messaging.

Organizations that might have scored high or low during content analysis may not necessarily have a high or low score for internal strategy, implementation or messaging, which might contribute to their overall ranking in other employer lists. This is also why some organizations were listed in the other top employer lists, that did not score high on the D&I analysis. There are likely many other factors involved when developing criteria for a top employers list. Organizations that did not score high in the analysis for this particular research likely scored high in various other areas and scales to be considered in those other top lists.

There are many definitions for D&I like the set presented earlier in this paper. Another set of definitions presented by Derve, Gundling & Leri (2014) which states:

“Diversity refers to differences of all kinds, including but not limited to gender, age, personal values, educational opportunities, personal history and physical ability.

Inclusion refers to creating a climate where differences and similarities are respected and people are welcomed into the workplace, have their voices heard and contributions recognized.” (p.1).

To build on this set of definitions, another set is presented below, based on data gathered and research conducted in this study, and on the researchers experience and point of view, directly for the business world. Diversity is a representation of the mix of explicit and implicit differences amongst a group of people (the workforce) that reflects the community being served or in which organizations operates in, which can then bring forward diversity of thought. Inclusion is how to ensure the mix of unique individuals feel accepted, respected and are treated

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fairly to work side-by-side so that diversity of thought can be harnessed to then help achieve business goals.

The key in this latter set is the end result, or purpose – something tangible. The purpose of diversity, in the context of organizations/corporations is of course to ensure there is equality and equal opportunity provided. However, the larger piece is to ensure there is diversity of thought to help propel the organization forward. Likewise, the purpose of inclusion is to ensure that diversity of thought can be captured, considered and discussed for it to then help achieve key business goals. In the context of workplace/organizations D&I, it is important to ensure there is/are business-related purposes embedded in the definition, so that there can be an answer to a “so what?” response.

7.1 Corporate Reputation

On corporate reputation, data gathered shows that D&I can impact corporate reputation from the point of view of customers/clients, potential employees, internal stakeholders and the public. Re-examining the definition of corporate reputation as mentioned above, Walker (2012) states that corporate reputation is “a relatively stable, issue-specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects compared against some standard” (p. 370, para. 6). It can be argued that in 2016, D&I is a significantly strong issue that is receiving much attention. This has been strongly fueled more than ever before considering the demographic of the Federal Cabinet. Walker (2010) explains that it is possible for organizations to have very different reputations for different business areas or issues. “...Wal-Mart has an excellent reputation for profitability, but a poor one for employee treatment (p. 369, para. 4). We see this definition of corporate reputation at work specifically with one of the interview

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candidates. As documented in the results section above, the senior hr manager for global technology and computer software/hardware organization shared the story about female go-go dancers being used for an event. Female attendees were shocked and disgusted and began to socialize their sentiments. Based on Walker's definition and how much attendees protested about the female dancers, this incident would likely impact one area of the business. There was a potential for corporate reputation to be affected, which it possibly was. However the organization took the time to apologize and made changes to policies and procedures. Perhaps the backlash was contained and not as severe as it could have been considering the organization likely had many other positive D&I or community-based initiatives in place. It's likely that community response was also mitigated if the organization acted quickly to make their public apology and change necessary internal protocols. Therefore, while there was noteworthy negative feedback about a particular event, the overall/aggregate perception was likely positive, based on all else that the organization was doing in the D&I or the larger community relations area.

Cravens, Oliver and Ramamoorti (2003) put forth a reputation index which highlights key areas that can help build an organization's corporate reputation. Of this index, the second most important area after products/services is employees. "The employees are the means by which a corporate reputation is created. Through the actions of all employees, at the senior management and lower levels, the public derives an image of the corporation." (p. 205, para. 6). It is clear that employees are integral in the success of any organization, for which there must be an open and accepting workplace culture for employees to know that they are accepted and included. This is the whole essence of D&I. "In order to serve the market, you have to hire the market," says the director of communications that supports the D&I function, during one of the interviews conducted for this study. He also states that at the board level, executive team level

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and front line level, targets are in place to ensure there is equal representation amongst diverse groups – “It’s pretty clear from a business case that we need to be diverse to effectively service our markets.” This supports why diverse employees should be critical to any organization, as they are the voice and brand ambassadors of that organizations. In addition, Cravens, Oliver and Ramamoorti (2003) state “...if the employees are not loyal to a company, then it is unlikely that customers and other stakeholders will be loyal” (p. 205, para. 6). Loyalty can be invoked through an open, accepting and respectful workplace environment and culture – another key attribute of D&I.

Shifting gears slightly, it was interesting to analyze one particular organization’s website through content analysis, and also interview that same organization. This particular organization had many D&I resources on their website along with details on how it is also implemented within and amongst their workforce. Through this analysis it was noted that there was considerable D&I and related verbiage along with supporting imagery. In parallel, the in-depth interview unveiled that the organization considers D&I quite important with strong and explicit support from the CEO and additional senior executives. This connection helps exemplify that the organization is indeed “walking the walk” – they are not only talking about D&I, but also practicing it very well. This in turn can be followed back to core organizational values and culture, so much so that the organization is considered one of the leading companies within the industry it operates.

Unfortunately, only four organizations scored high on the content analysis scorecard. Most organizations scored in the moderate range, while some had almost no mention of D&I on any webpages. It was surprising to see the various levels of D&I content, considering some of the companies that were in the moderate range are large national and multinational corporations.

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Some companies have a small statement about how they are an equal opportunity employer, however even this little amount is considered poor. According to Nordquist (2014), the below suggestions can guide organizations when developing web space for D&I:

- “1. Be transparent
2. Dedicate a singular page to “Diversity and Inclusion.”
3. Use testimonials from clients and current employees
4. “Diversity and Inclusion” should be its own page and should use that title
5. Diversity needs to be present in more than just a webpage
6. Provide lots of pictures, realistic ones” (p. 52).

Nordquist (2014) states that the difference between suggestion 2 and suggestion 4 is that any diversity webpage should be titled “Diversity and Inclusion” – “Adding ‘inclusion’ in the title speaks more about the corporate culture and provides direction to speak about how the company actually incorporates diversity rather than stating that it exists” (p. 53).

7.2 Communications Strategy

From a theoretical standpoint, we can begin our analysis with Situational Theory, which was also mentioned earlier in this paper. However, it should be noted that this theory hones in on the fact that “...problems are relevant only to people who experience consequences related to organizational behaviours or decisions. Therefore, organizations do not have permanent interlocutors with whom they interact and communicate, but changing audiences in relation to specific circumstances.” (Ravazzani, 2006, p. 9). Situational Theory is all about unique and

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diverse publics, which can also be applied to D&I. This tool can be used to better identify diverse audiences, plan and implement strategy that would resonate with those diverse audiences, whether it may be ethnic professionals, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community or Aboriginal groups. Public relations, or the communications function's work rests on connecting with various stakeholders, which should be key in understanding the importance that communications has in D&I strategy and implementation. When D&I communications strategically considers the various stakeholder it must communicate with, there is a greater chance for strategy and implementation to become part of an organizations culture, as opposed to just a stand-alone/functional tactic. "When D&I is embedded in workplace culture and when the business reasons are understood, it becomes more personal to each individual. There is a shift from just being measured and tracked to something that's more meaningful to each person," says a senior hr manager for global technology and computer software/hardware organization. Ultimately, if D&I is more personal to each employee, it will likely be accepted and practiced more openly creating a progressive work culture.

Earlier in this paper, it was documented that:

"Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are recognized as C-suite issues with impact on reputation and brand, internally and externally. To maximize this impact, communicators must do a better job of understanding their organizations' D&I strategy, and integrating it with communication strategy. This provides leadership opportunities for communicators." (Bohlmann, Harrison & Leong, 2013, p. 1).

This same reference can be used to support the connection between D&I and communications strategy, in theory and in practice. This is supported by all interview candidates

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stating that either there should be formal or informal communications support, or some kind of alignment. Communications needs to play a role in D&I strategy and implementation. This is because communications is able to “identify various audiences, understand who is in each audience, the purpose of communicating with that audience, how D&I communications might be different for each audience,” states the CEO of a D&I consultancy. This can and should be considered when implementing communications or D&I strategy, which the communications function has expertise in. In addition to the communications function, D&I would work best if it is connected to all other business areas. However there can be a tendency for D&I to simply become a line item amongst a larger Communications plan, if there is no senior officer assigned to D&I, as expressed by the head of D&I of a national financial institution.

Grunig (2006) also references the importance of diversity in his work with the Excellence study.

“The emphasis on gender, however, also focused our attention on diversity of race and ethnicity—a fifth part of the Excellence edifice. This focus, along with the international nature of the project, helped us to expand the edifice to make it appropriate for use outside the United States—in diverse cultural, political, and economic contexts” (p. 161).

Supplementary to this note is the how much immigration has grown in Canada. There have been over 200,000 new immigrants every year to Canada for at least the last 10 years, of which most have typically come from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the United Kingdom. Also, more females have emigrated to Canada than males over the last 10 years (Government of Canada, 2014). The rise of immigration also means a new potential workforce which then places much more importance on D&I and communications strategy, relationship

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building and messaging. Immigrants are not only arriving in Canada with their physical baggage, but also their ‘cultural baggage’; their unique preferences, experiences, skills, insights, connections, thinking and education (Sahni, 2015). Understanding this ‘cultural baggage’ can have a significant effect on workplace D&I. This is substantiated by the CEO of one particular consultancy that was interviewed who shares that when thinking about D&I, what comes to mind is embracing all the different ‘things’ that make us/individuals unique – those things that we bring into the country and our jobs. Because of the high immigrant population in Canada, it is more important than ever for the communications function to be involved in helping develop and implement D&I strategy, since it is the communications function that has the expertise in developing key messages and implementing intern and external programs for various audiences. To address this point specifically, a regional director of health equity and inclusion of a healthcare provider and facility states during an interview that external reputation and credibility would not be as successful if not tied to the Communications portfolio.

7.3 Corporate Social Responsibility

Of course leaving a positive imprint in the community is and should be of great importance for organizations, which all interview participants shared. However, the larger topic of conversation is that with D&I becoming a much stronger concept in Corporate Canada, the implications of CSR have also grown. Organizations must cast a larger net as to what organizations should be concerned about, above and beyond their core business. The concept of CSR must evolve as has workplace diversity, which can impact corporate reputation much more. McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2014) discusses a research paper, by Perrini, Pogutz, and Tencati (n.d.) which examined the state of CSR in Italy. “One of their significant findings is that firms are more likely to support CSR activities that have a direct effect on the welfare of the

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local community” (p. 10, para. 2). This is a similar outlook that Canadian firms have. If a workplace and local community are both diverse, it would make sense for CSR initiatives to support diverse investments, projects or campaigns. This in turn would work best if CSR decision makers themselves are diverse, as suggested by a CEO of a consultancy mentioned earlier in this paper. The more diversity amongst CSR decision makers, the more likelihood of diverse CSR projects and a greater social impact. This is the direct impact that D&I can have on the local community.

The notion of CSR diversity is directly supported by Harjoto, Lakshmana and Lee (2015), who state “We find that gender, tenure, and expertise diversities seem to be the driving factors of firms’ CSR activities. Furthermore, we find that board diversity significantly increases CSR performance by increasing CSR strengths...” (p. 1). While board diversity is referenced, it can be argued that diversity should exist amongst CSR decision makers as mentioned earlier. In addition, an example from Latin America shows another direct connection between CSR and diversity in that “...corporate CSR tends to focus on community relations or environmental sustainability... strong potential rewards for companies to pursue CSR by focusing more on gender and diversity” (Repositorio Digital, n.d., p. 1). While there are emerging connections between CSR and D&I, each should be managed as a separate entity, portfolio or concept. Often D&I might be considered as a line-item within CSR, however it is deserving of its own strategy. As we have just seen, a diverse and inclusive workforce can indeed impact CSR, along with many other areas within a company or business line. “...companies also understand that diversity can help grow sales and improve customer satisfaction, help risk management and enhance creativity and flexibility in organizational processes leading to better problem-solving.” (Repositorio Digital, n.d., p. 1). This was referenced by many interview candidates, including the

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head of D&I at a national financial institution who mentioned that the D&I Council and CSR Council both have executive support with senior leadership sitting on each/both council(s). This helps ensure that D&I and CSR are connected, but still remain independent of one another.

8. Limitations & Recommendations

Developing a definition of any kind takes considerable research, multiple iterations and often leveraging points from other similar work. Based on results from all in-depth interviews, it is highly recommended that when developing a definition for D&I, consideration be given to keywords, overarching theories and business terminology such as: diversity of thought, leveraging experiences of the workforce to achieve that diversity of thought, the business impact of D&I, harnessing unique experiences, acceptance and working in a healthy progressive ecosystem.

For content analysis, a resource limitation, in terms of time taken for the analysis, is what resulted in only 15 websites being considered. With additional resources, it would have been best to analyze more than 15 websites and perhaps leverage additional top employer lists. In addition for any similar study that involves content analysis and in-depth interviews, consideration should be given to ensure some of the same organizations are included for each data collection method. For this study, a national financial institution was the only one organization that was included in content analysis and for which an in-depth interview was conducted. These two data points provided additional insight as to what level of importance is placed on D&I.

For the in-depth interviews, one of the biggest limitations was the sample size. The researcher's initial attempt was to connect with at least 15 different Canadian companies, which in itself is a fairly small sample size. However, only 12 interviews were conducted. While this

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was still considered a healthy number for the purpose of this particular research, a larger sample size would be needed for a more inclusive study. Having a larger data source would help add to the reliability and validity of any research. If conducting in-depth interviews to better understand the role that D&I plays in organizations, it is recommended that there be at least two similar organizations included, or of the same industry, so that results can be compared. For this particular research two national financial institutions were included with some similarities regarding the role that D&I plays. The richness in the results was seeing differences amongst some answers, each correct and fitting for the nature of each organization. This can help provide a different level of understanding on how various approaches to D&I are being considered. This was directly seen when asking the question “Should organizations take a public policy/support position when it comes to external diversity and inclusion issues?”

There was also a big challenge in contacting the appropriate individuals for interviews. Many attempts to some organizations failed as there was no response from the potential candidates being contacted. While LinkedIn worked well in some cases, it was also unreliable with many individuals, as messages sent and introduction attempts made on this platform resulted in no response. This resulted in less participants, impacting the total number of cases to be interviewed.

All interviews conducted were over the phone, which is convenient for all parties involved. However, with additional resources, in-person interviews could have provided additional insights as this would require a visit to each company’s office. Once inside, the researcher would have been able to get a small glimpse of D&I in action, taking note of any visible demographic differences of employees and interview participants. While it is understandable that this is not a true measure of D&I at any organization, it would indeed

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provide an opportunity to witness any obvious ethnic and gender representation. This small piece of data collection would be able to supplement other larger data analysis.

Lastly, all attempts were made to minimize any personal bias associated with any research conducted. However, it may be possible that since the researcher's name was included in emails and documents sent to all participants, and because the researcher himself is an ethnic professional, this might have impacted how participants responded to some questions.

9. Conclusion and Future Research

This study raises the need for continued research by investigating further the relationship between D&I and communications/public relations. Looking into this further will showcase how critical the communications function is to the success of any D&I program. Having the communications function closely involved is not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do, considering the importance of building strong relationships with various stakeholders.

In the current context of the business world in which relationships with brands is the most important it has ever been and with an influx of a diverse workforce, organizations must invest time and resources on D&I. By doing so, many business units can be positively impacted along with leaving a positive imprint in local communities.

The results from this research show that most organizations are referring to D&I on their websites, some more than others, but much more work is needed to place a stronger emphasis on this area. Considering how diverse the workforce, society and communities are, organizations in general must continue to support or do a better job of bringing light to D&I in a capacity that makes sense for the organization and industry.

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In-depth interviews suggested that D&I is considered strongly amongst most organizations, and that many different programs are implemented. For those that do not have a strong program base, they are either engaging in conversation about D&I or developing strategy. It is clear from all candidates that D&I is not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing – it makes business sense. It could be argued that at the tail end of 2016, when we have a well-balanced and mixed Federal government, all organizations should have D&I programs that are fully implemented. However, by slow burning this area, at least organizations who have not yet implemented programs, are proceeding with due diligence to ensure it is indeed considered in a way for the long-term, to yield similar long term results. That said, taking too long to strategize could negatively impact organizations – conversations need to develop into strategy and implementation at a faster rate.

For future research, it would be interesting to compare results to similar research in the United States, to understand each country's position on corporate D&I. Insights from these studies could then be combined to yield a broader North American outlook. It is more important than ever for organizations to consider D&I seriously as we are in a time of much ethnic, cultural and religious unrest in the United States and Canada. Organizations could use this opportunity to better serve their workforce and communities by promoting D&I within their internal stakeholders and consider external programs. In addition, it should also be further explored how strong of a connection the communications function should have to D&I. Considering it is the communications team that typically manages relationship building with most important stakeholders, a formal support system should be developed so that D&I can leverage this expertise.

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As noted, all interview participants at one point had shared the notion that D&I should be implemented, practiced or be given an important role because it is the right thing to do. In addition, all participants shared real business impacts and outcomes as to the affect that D&I can have. Considering that it is quite common knowledge from either a social, community, citizen or humanitarian point of view that D&I, equality, treating others fairly is important, let us also move forward in this overall discussion. Let us continue to focus our energy on understanding how D&I can bring about changes and what the real business advantages are. From there let us also explore explicit ways that D&I can impact big change. This is seen directly with the example provided earlier of a large potato chip manufacturer who had tested a particular new chip flavour along with packaging amongst one of its ethnic employee resource groups. It's time that we not shy away or be afraid of our differences, rather fully acknowledge and embrace them. We are all unique and different. Let's accept this and use this for the greater (business) good.

Organizations do have a larger responsibility to leave a positive imprint in the communities they operate in or serve. Right now is as good as time as any to showcase why D&I is important not only to the workforce but to society and communities. Let us keep in mind that it is acceptable to recognize color and diversity. However, what is even more important is how that color and diversity is treated in the workforce. Diversity is the 'what'; Inclusion is the 'how' – let us now focus on actively leveraging this dynamic to better influence business impact!

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11. Appendix A – In-Depth Interview Questions/Guide

These same questions were asked of all 12 interview participants without deviation, to ensure that data gathered was as unbiased as possible. Each research question was presented, followed discussion about each question, individually.

RQ1 - How and to what extent, does diversity and inclusion impact corporate reputation?

- When you hear the terms “diversity and inclusion” what immediately comes to mind?
- How would you define diversity and inclusion?
- How and to what extent are you incorporating and implementing diversity and inclusion programs at your workplace?
- To what extent are diversity and inclusion programs being leveraged to enhance recruiting practices, brand awareness or product/service delivery?
- How much of an impact might diversity and inclusion have on corporate reputation from your stakeholders’ point of view (customers, investors and competitors)? Any feedback from stakeholders?
- How does diversity and inclusion amongst the three following groups impact corporate reputation: a diverse board of directors, a diverse senior leadership team and diverse front line staff?

RQ2 - How and to what extent, should diversity and inclusion programs be aligned to the goals and objectives of Communications and/or Chief Communications Officer?

- To what extent is the Communications team/department/CCO responsible for developing and nurturing relationships with ALL stakeholders?
- To what extent should diversity and inclusion be tied to Communications/CCO goals?
- Are diversity and inclusion programs aligned with corporate/organizational goals? How?
- How is diversity and inclusion practiced or implemented differently if it is part of an organization’s culture vs. just a functional strategy/tactic?

RQ3 - How and to what extent, does Corporate Canada have a responsibility and level of influence to promote diversity and inclusion by actively pursuing corporate boards, leadership teams and front line staff that are themselves diverse?

- Should organizations be concerned with leaving a positive imprint in the communities they operate/conduct business in? Why?
- If implemented correctly, what impact can diversity and inclusion have on the local community?
- To what extent should diversity and inclusion be included in Corporate Social Responsibility planning?
- Should organizations take a public policy/support position when it comes to external diversity and inclusion issues?
- Has your organization taken any external public policy/support positions on diversity and inclusion issues?

12. Appendix B-Interview Candidate Details

These 12 candidates were sourced from varying industries to help provide a broad range experiences and key learnings. Limited demographic information is shared below to ensure the anonymity for each individual.

Table B.1		
Interview Candidate Details		
Job Title	Organization Description	Gender
CEO	D&I Consultancy	F
CEO	D&I Consultancy	M
CEO	D&I Consultancy	F
Communications Manager	Automotive Manufacturer	F
Director of Communications (supporting the D&I function)	Financial Institution	M
Director of Health Equity & Inclusion	Healthcare Provider and Facility	F
Director of Marketing & Communications	Regional/municipal Government	F
Diversity Manager	Canadian Airline	F
Diversity Relations Officer	GTA Police Service	M
Head of Diversity & Inclusion	Financial Institution	M
Human Resource Manager	Global Technology and Computer Software/Hardware Organization	F
Senior Director	Global Professional Services Firm	F

13. Appendix C-Content Analysis Results

This table summarizes scores for the top four organizations who had the most ‘diversity and/or inclusion, ‘equity and/or equal’ keywords and images on their About Us or Careers webpages. Qualitative and quantitative measures were both used as indicated by numerical values and brief examples/explanations. Out of a possible total of 30, scores were given out of 5 for each of the three categories on the About Us or Careers pages (‘diversity and/or inclusion, ‘equity and/or equal’ keywords and images). From there percentages were calculated for easier comparison.

Table C.1 Content Analysis Results				
Keywords – ABOUT US	APPLE (n=number of mentions)	SALESFORCE (n=number of mentions)	ERICSSON (n=number of mentions)	RBC (n=number of mentions)
“Diversity” and/or “Inclusion”	1	11	20+	20+
Example/Explanation	A link to a separate webpage highlighting D&I, by focusing on select diverse employees and their educational and professional background	...by raising awareness around equality, and the business drivers for diversity and inclusion	We are committed to increasing gender diversity in our workforce	Diversity & Inclusion: We embrace diversity for innovation and growth
Score	5	4	5	5
“Equity” and/or “Equal”	3	2	11	3
Example/Explanation	Equal work deserves equal pay	A link to a separate tertiary webpage on equality-not very accessible	...achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Employment Equity Report
Score	3	3	5	3
D&I related Images	13	7	20+	20+
Example/Explanation	Fair representation	Medium representation	About Us video	Images from Exec Team
Score	5	4	5	5
Sub Total 1	13	11	15	13

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Table C.2 Content Analysis Results				
Keywords – CAREERS	APPLE (n=number of mentions)	SALESFORCE (n=number of mentions)	ERICSSON (n=number of mentions)	RBC (n=number of mentions)
“Diversity” and/or “Inclusion”	4	12	20+	20+
Example/Explanation	At Apple, we believe inclusion inspires innovation	... addressing race, diversity, and inclusion	Listen to our CEO, Hans Vesterberg, explain how diversity encourages innovation	Diversity Works Here
Score	4	5	5	5
“Equity” and/or “Equal”	1	1	4	1
Example/Explanation	Apple is an Equal Opportunity Employer that is committed to inclusion and diversity.	Femmeforce is our global women’s network that works to promote diversity, inclusion and equality	Ericsson provides equal employment opportunities (EEO)	Poor representation
Score	3	4	4	1
D&I related Images	4	10	20+	18
Example/Explanation	Fair representation	Fair representation	Video of CEO	Fair representation
Score	4	5	5	5
Sub Total 2	11	14	14	11
Total Scores	24	25	29	24
Overall Score (k=total score as a percentage)	80%	83%	97%	80%


14. Appendix D-Cross Reference of Company Websites

The organizations used for content analysis were cross-referenced with three other 'top employer' lists, to try and better understand why each might/might not have a strong D&I web presence. There are likely many other factors involved when developing criteria for a top employers list. Organizations that did not score high in the analysis for this particular research likely scored high in various other areas and scales to be considered in those other top lists.

Table D.1 Cross Reference of Company Websites				
	2016 Glassdoor's Employee's Choice Awards (North America)	2016 Canada's Top 100 Employers	2016 Canada's Best Diversity Employers	2016 America's Best Employers
Earls Kitchen & Bar	•			
Ceridian	•	•		
Apple	•			•
Salesforce	•	•		
Ericsson	•	•		
ATB Financial	•			
RBC	•	•	•	
Manulife	•			
Telus	•	•	•	
Electronic Arts	•			
GE	•	•		•
Enbridge	•	•	•	
Ubisoft	•	•		
Air Canada	•	•	•	
Starbucks	•			•
Notes: Sources for each list	https://www.glassdoor.ca/Award/Best-Places-to-Work-Canada-LST_KQ0,26.htm	http://canadastop100.com/national/	http://www.canadastop100.com/diversity/	http://www.forbes.com/best-employers/list/#tab:rank

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15. Appendix E-MREB Certificate of Clearance

		McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB) c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca	
CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH			
Application Status: New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> Project Number: 2016 157			
TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:			
The Impact of Diversity and Inclusion on Corporate Reputation, Communications Strategy and Social Citizenship.			
Faculty Investigator(s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
T. Flynn	Communication Studies	(905)- 525-9	tflynn@mcmaster.ca
Co-Investigators/ Students	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
P. Chohan			
The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:			
<input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification. <input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below:			
COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and cleared before any alterations are made to the research.			
Reporting Frequency:		Annual: Sep-15-2017	Other:
Date: Sep-15-2016		Chair, Dr. S. Bray 