

Issue Management Plan

Project Name: #diversity

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1. Our Capabilities

Edelman is a globally recognized and trusted PR agency. Resources such as our Trust Barometer allow clients and consumers to look to us as a trusted source for business information. Edelman also strives to help companies adapt to various shifts in culture, from the growing need for diversity and inclusivity, to higher values being placed on transparency and straightforwardness.

We have a wide-ranging list of capabilities so we are able to specialize based on our clients' needs. A few areas of expertise include technology and digital, multicultural engagement and branded entertainment.

Edelman has a pulse on the current technology environment and trends, as well as how to utilize this information to further advance and differentiate tech companies. In each of our offices globally, we have tech experts who help companies build and maintain brand reputation. In addition, we aid companies in creating a presence online and on social media. This enables companies to maintain relevance on digital platforms and helps facilitate communication with real people in the real world. We served past tech clients Xbox, Samsung, and Adobe by helping them build brand reputation and become global names. We also helped Facebook transition from a start-up to a multi-billion dollar company.

Through our multicultural engagement, we are able to reach relevant audiences with appropriate content at the appropriate time. We do this through a team of multicultural and multilingual experts who keep our clients informed about cultural nuances. Successful campaigns have included clients such as Microsoft, Nestle, Starbucks, and the United Negro College Fund. Areas of focus within the multicultural engagement department include: digital media, diversity and inclusion, issues and reputation management, and media (traditional and social).

Branded entertainment seeks to create deeper connections between companies and audiences. We work with content creators to produce branded advertising for our clients in order to harness storytelling and maximum impact. We utilize entertainment programming to distribute content across appropriate channels.

Crisis and Issues Management: Through expertise in areas such as technology and digital, multicultural engagement, and branded entertainment, we are able to cater to a technological, storytelling service like Netflix. HP's campaign #MoreLikeMe done by Edelman worked towards diversity, inclusivity and improvement of the internal environment. Edelman's work with campaigns like this would benefit Netflix in better representing their growing audience.

2. Issue identification

We have observed across digital platforms that Netflix's lack of diversity internally is affecting the diversity of its original content. This has the potential to create further issues for the longevity of Netflix and the trust that consumers place in them.

3. Issue Analysis

We acknowledge that the issue of the lack of internal diversity is complex and one that companies have faced for many years. While some may argue that diversity in the C-Suite or the writing process does not have any effect on the content that is produced, others would argue that diversity has everything to do with the content that is produced. Netflix is a global brand that serves multicultural communities and as such, the internal environment at Netflix should reflect this diverse audience. By keeping a pulse on cultural calls to action by viewers, we have observed the need for proper diversification and representation at Netflix.

Proper diversification and representation starts at the top and trickles down. One of the things we have noticed through our research is the need for diversity within Netflix's C-Suite. According to the Netflix media center, two out of eight members of the management team are women, and every member is white between the ages 40 and 60 years old. A willingness to change at the highest level is an indication that your company means business.

Within the company, Netflix's demographics show a majority of white employees across the company, including areas such as leadership, creative and corporate, and tech. While the graphs and information on the Inclusion and Diversity [Appendix XYZ] portion of your website are vague, the issue is glaring. The majority of employees are white whereas other diverse groups are lacking. In the Leadership category for instance, 60 percent of employees are White, 16 percent are Asian, 11 percent are unidentified, 5 percent are Black, 5 percent are Hispanic and 3 percent are other/multiple.

According to IMDb, the majority of original content creators for Netflix are white, middle-aged males. One of the issues regarding largely white production teams in charge of shows with a diverse cast is that it can lead to misleading or harmful representation based on stereotypes. Though many Netflix originals appear to be diverse, those characters do not truly have their own voices when written by white people. Additionally, some Netflix original content features controversial topics that have been received as problematic in how said topics are represented and handled. One such example is with the reception of the season one ending of *13 Reasons Why* when the main character was depicted committing suicide.

The lack of information regarding potential trigger warnings and graphic content increased suicide risk in some teenage viewers as the University of Michigan found in their research.

While Netflix is a thought leader and pioneer in an era of fast-paced change, there are still areas for improvement. Including diversity among the C-Suite will not only pave the way for employees and producers below but will improve brand reputation. Netflix will once again be recognized as a pioneer of change, and in the process, not only improve content but allow minority voices to feel heard.

4. Strategy options

1. We recommend integrating more diversity into Netflix as a whole. We do not recommend firing people but when new positions become available, consider adding more diversity to your team. Starting with the C-Suite, create partnership positions to align with already existing positions. For example, create partnership opportunities alongside the Chief Content Officer so there is a chance for more diverse content to be acquired.
2. We recommend that Netflix hire more diverse producers and writers for its original content. We recommend this strategy be implemented by creating a team of diverse professionals to be a more integral part of the hiring, writing, and producing departments in order to offer more inclusion and representation.
3. We recommend creating a sensitivity team dedicated to keeping an eye out for potentially problematic content such as suicide, eating disorders, misrepresentation of race, and the like. We recommend this team consist of racially, culturally, LGBTQ+ individuals and be implemented by including them in every step of the Netflix original production process. We also recommend creating an avenue like a Twitter account dedicated to informing viewers about potential trigger warnings or graphic content. Pages such as this would provide viewers with in-depth knowledge regarding potentially harmful content.

5. References

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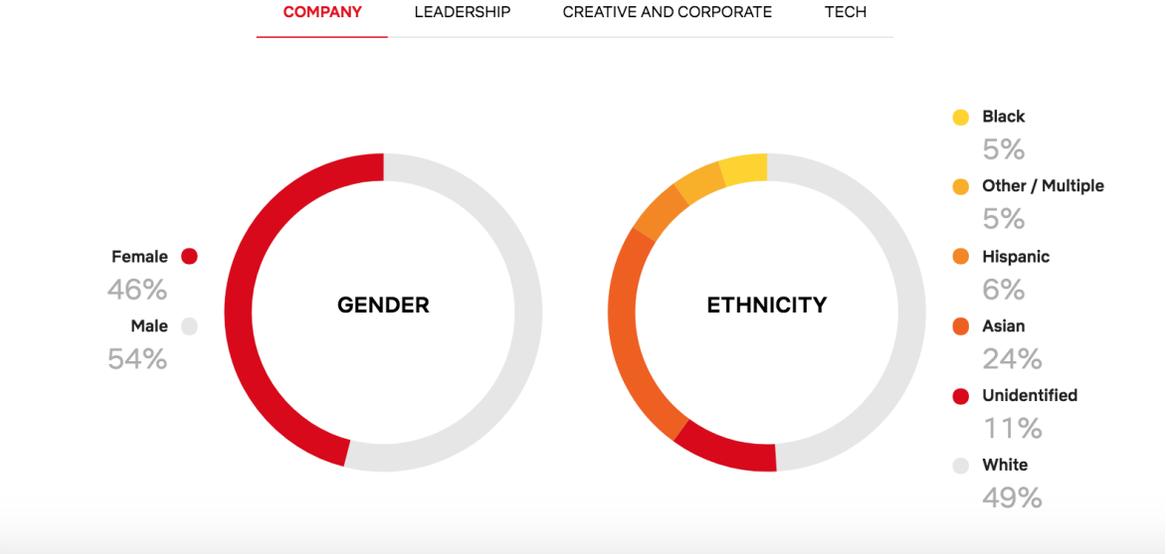
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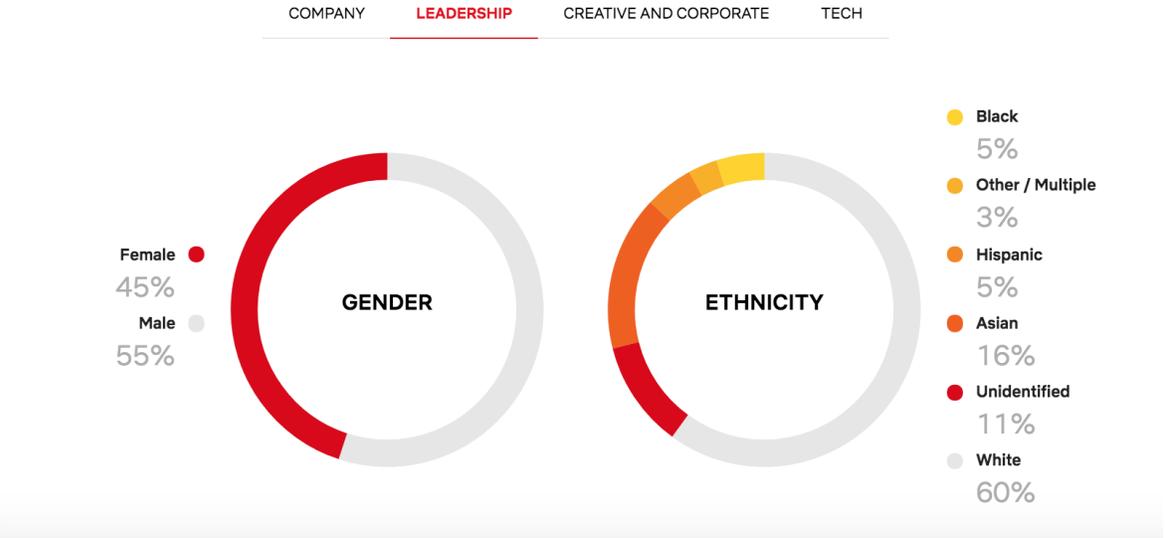
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6. Appendices

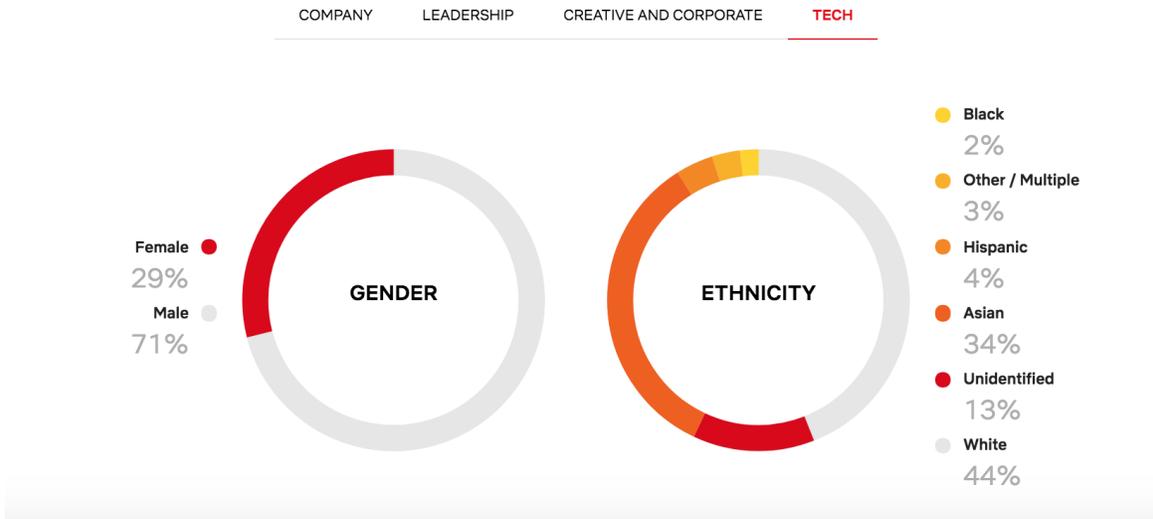
Workforce Demographics for Q3 2018



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