

**Two Scoops of Justice – A Case Study on how Ben & Jerry’s Uses its Corporate Voice to Advocate for Progressive Change**

[Sean Greenwood](https://www.ragan.com/ragan_speakers/sean-greenwood/?id=288937), Grand Poobah of PR**, Ben & Jerry’s**

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* When we put out our statement around George Floyd, we got a third of our annual PR hits in three weeks.
* Ben & Jerry’s models its approach to speaking up about social justice on the work and words of the late Congressman John Lewis, who said: “Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”
* Ben & Jerry’s was able to work with John Lewis as a partner, when he was alive, and has a mural on one of its factory walls dedicated to Lewis.

Why did Ben & Jerry’s statement perform so well in the wake of the death of George Floyd?

Greenwood offers four important pillars:

* **Timely.** You can’t wait too long to speak up.
* **Language.** The stark language of the statement against white supremacy was able to break through.
* **Action.** Offer concrete steps your organization will take or support to address the issue. Ben & Jerry’s called for several legislative actions and other reforms.
* **Authenticity.** Be able to show how you are taking action internally to root out systemic oppression and racism. For example, Ben & Jerry’s works to help support Black farmers who have been denied resources over generations leading to an underrepresentation in the farms that Ben & Jerry’s can partner with for ingredients in its products.

**It matters who says the words**

Greenwood makes the point that the spokesperson matter when evaluating a particular external message. He offers a statement made by a former president of the U.S.:

“It is incontrovertible that race relations have improved significantly during my lifetime and yours and that opportunities have opened up and that attitudes have changed. That is a fact.”

Greenwood then asks if that statement is troubling or acceptable if you knew that the speaker was Donald Trump or Barack Obama? (It was, in fact, Obama.)

Who makes the statement on the issue of race and social justice deeply matters, even when sharing what on its face might seem like a simple truth.

**Making the business case for social justice**

* What makes Ben & Jerry’s unique is how it decided to make its social justice agenda an equal third part of its organizational mission, alongside great product and economic success.
* “Folding our product commitment into our social commitment is where we find our secret sauce,” Greenwood says.
* That commitment is then reflected in the communications of the organization, rather than the other way around where a desire to be seen as “progressive” drives internal decisions and messages. “If you get on Ben & Jerry’s social media, you will find us constantly talking about these things that we are invested in,” Greenwood says.

**Cause-related marketing vs. values-led activism**

* Greenwood differentiates between companies that make statements about social justi9ce to drive profits and acquire customers and businesses that make statements about social justice because of their beliefs—and then live with the consequences.
* Cause-related marketing stars with “What do our consumers care about?” and then leads to a brand identity based on market research.
* Issues advocacy starts internally—in Ben & Jerry’s case with a desired progressive social change that is agreed upon by the company’s stakeholders. Then the brand works backwards to identify actions and use its business to drive results.
* “We try to make it deeper than [profit] by looking at our whole supply chain and operations,” Greenwood says

**Walking the talk**

* Greenwood recommends working with partners who are already working on this. “We’re experts at ice cream,” he says, arguing that a business should know when it is out of its depth, no matter how passionate they might be about a social justice issue.
* Some partners Ben & Jerry’s works with: NAACP, ACLU, Color of Change, and more
* Greenwood also identifies four workstreams that look to ensure Ben & Jerry’s is living up to its values internally:
* **Company culture and practices.** Is the organization inclusive and welcoming for all employees?
* **Supplier engagement.** Is the supply chain driving business to Black-owned businesses, diverse suppliers?
* **Franchisee Network.** How are diverse populations represented in the group of operators who own Ben & Jerry’s locations?
* **KPIs.** How is progress being measured and reported across the whole organization?

Greenwood challenges other businesses to find ways to leverage their power as a business to drive the change they want to see. He gives the example once more of John Lewis who would hold an “executive session” with himself before a march or demonstration where he might be beaten or jailed for his beliefs. John would say: “If this is the price you must pay for people to be free, liberated, whole then it is a price we must pay.”

In Greenwoods view, all organizations should require themselves to pay whatever price there might be to advance the cause of justice and freedom for all.

**Panel Discussion: Engaging White Males as True Champions for Diversity & Inclusion**

**Moderator:**

Alonda Williams, Senior Vice President & Chief Experience Officer, **YMCA of Greater Seattle**

**Panelists:**

Adam Solarz, Global Head of Internal and Client Communications, **NielsenIQ**

Lee Rubin, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, **Citrix**

Jim Lucier, Executive Vice President, **ProcureWise**

Nick Coy, Director – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, **Dutch Bros Coffee**

Vinny Catalano, Senior Vice President, **Lockton Insurance Brokers, LLC**

James White, Head of Diversity & Inclusion, **Lord Abbett**

**Moderator wisdom:**

* **Alonda stresses that allyship is a verb, not a noun**

**Why white males feel scared engaging with DEI:**

* **James L** doesn’t personally feel this way, but he thinks we need to recognize that some white males just may not care. We need to acknowledge that, but he believes there are very few. He also says that some simply don’t know how to join the conversation or have a sense of awkwardness about it. He adds that privilege is also a common barrier to dialogue. The other reason is that they may not know how they fit in or where they can contribute. Some orgs have ERGs and allyships, but many don’t have any of those things. No experience, no education.
* **Vinny** says ‘scared’ is a very big word. He wants to suggest this is a subset of Boomers and Gen-X males who have never had to address these issues. It’s a simple normal human reaction to have to deal with something very new and DEI used to be something they didn’t need to have on their radar – now they do. Everyone in the ecosystem needs to be treated with more empathy, as few people want new societal norms pushed on them. It takes proactive training, like unconscious bias training, to engage on a better level. We all need to be familiar with new terms that are part of the vernacular like ‘allyship’

**Addressing understanding bias at orgs and personal journeys:**

* **Adam** says the first thing to do is acknowledge the immense amount of education required. Two sides to the coin: the person has to be personally accountable for reading, learning and understanding, while orgs need to take accountability for helping to educate others. Nielsen has focused more on senior leader white males because they are more likely to drive change. When working with them, he starts with data – when presented with clear, compelling and truthful data it tends to make leaders perk up and pay attention. Showcase metrics that directly link DEI activities to business outcomes. Having conversations about privilege with smaller examples (left-handed v right-handed etc) removes the conversation from heavier topics like privilege while still making room for the conversations to happen.

**How can white men be good allies?**

* **Nick** stresses that DEI practitioners and organizations are making an effort to include white men in the conversations about DEI, as it speaks to their role as change agents. Nick identifies as Latinx and understands his role at bringing white men along for this journey. Acknowledge white men’s historic ability to be advocates for change with their influence and use that strategically. Also ask, what does it mean to be an ally? Understand where you are in your allyship journey and think of it as a continuum: on one hand is someone who supports oppression, on the other hand is someone who confronts it. The goal is to actively become someone who participates in conversations about equity and uses their influence to create change. It will get uncomfortable, but that’s where empathy comes into play. When we better understand one another, we have the ability to diffuse stereotypes and micro-aggressions, which lead to results. But that can only happen when people feel truly valued and belong.
* In the practical sense, Nick stresses what leveraging your influence means. During meetings, ensure that opinions and input are heard from all people. Don’t talk over. If you are further along in your allyship continuum, call out bad behavior and use it as an opportunity to educate people. He stresses education through media, books and movies, and a nontraditional focus on stand-up comedy as a way to hear lived experiences from different cultures. Being part of the change also means understanding your place. In some places, you are only there to listen. Be a mentor to a colleague who belongs to an underrepresented group. Be vocal and champion what works or what doesn’t work.
* **Adam** stresses talking to other allies as super critical here, as it puts you in a comfortable place to have conversations about things that can make a difference for other people. Destigmatize the idea that talking about empathy is ‘soft’. Provide a selfish angle about your comms if you need to – DEI is a core component of being a future leader. It’s not an option. If you’re an ally, you get an ally back. A rising tide lifts all boats. The barrier of entry is low – just LISTEN. With more nuance, it’s a balance between when to listen and when to speak up.
* **Vinny** stresses the need to take the responsibility to call people out and course correct in a nice manner. It takes courage and empathy

**Steps Lee has taken to promote inclusion at his org (tech space):**

* **Lee** is a huge advocate of using Best Places to Work surveys as benchmark tools. They started benchmarking with disability, working to get to 100 on the index. By using different surveys Citrix was able to lay out a roadmap that has allowed them to work methodically through, creating policies and benefits that help them know what it takes to be great. He encourages benchmark as a way for companies to know how they measure up to their peers.
* To create opportunities to reduce barriers for women and minorities at Citrix, Lee stresses how they have adapted innovative or new policies that champion unheard employee identities based on learning from the surveys. ERGs are working together to support their co-workers to boost allyship when national conversations around specific identities and cultures are at the forefront.

**Steps James W. has taken:**

* **James W.** says that committing to DEI work has been a privilege check be acknowledging his responsibility to use the opportunities that have been afforded to him. Acknowledging bias means asking what it takes to raise a young person of color and leveraging your privilege to have conversations with those white males in power that other folks won’t have. Classes and training aside, he stresses a multi-prong approach to addressing racial inequity or gender inequity. An ongoing, experiential format. They combine classroom training with storytelling in their approach to promote self-education. Civic engagement is another part – it’s on everyone to understand the issues going on right now, the bills and the legislations that have discriminatory language (along with who supports them). Take your blinders off and look at the world around you, he says. Unmask the narratives. In the Jim Crow days, he says, it was almost easier because the words were clear that people couldn’t use. Now the ideas are baked into policies and hiding in plain sight. He recommends Richard Louie’s (SP?) “Enough About Me” book.

**Using empathy in allyship:**

* **Vinny** says if we lead with empathy there is more room for conversations. When he first meets someone new, his first thought now is how little he knows about them – he may have stalked them on LinkedIn or whatever, but it’s just the tip of the iceberg. You have to understand someone’s life experiences and where they’re coming from. Treat everyone like a blank canvas and as ‘what’s your story’ then shut up. Let them talk, let them share. Vinny had diverse friends as a kid (growing up in Manahttan) but acknowledges not everyone has and doesn’t assume everyone has.

**Cultural Levers: Embedding DEI into the Organization to Make an Authentic and Meaningful Impact**

*Purpose-driven values and practices are being incorporated into the workplace and marketplace. Initiatives engaging leadership, infrastructure, teams, individuals and communities we serve need to be part of the DEI transformation. What can we do to ensure that DEI strategies will be successfully implemented and sustained to make a lasting difference?*

[**Nicole McCann-Davis**](https://www.ragan.com/ragan_speakers/nicole-mccann-davis/?id=288937)**,** Director, Communications and Multicultural Affairs, **Seasons Healthcare Management**

[**LaTricia Hill-Chandler**](https://www.ragan.com/ragan_speakers/latricia-hill-chandler/?id=288937)**,** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, **Arvest Bank**

[**Janet Rizzuto**](https://www.ragan.com/ragan_speakers/janet-rizzuto/?id=288937)**,** Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – The Americas, **Warner Music Group, Corp**

**Q: What are the barriers to effective DE&I?**

**Nicole:** Without buy-in from the leadership team, that becomes a consistent barrier.

**LaTricia:** People don’t know exactly what it is. It means so much to different people. Once people are self-educated and hold themselves accountable, that is one of the solutions.

**Janet:** **The first question we as a panel we are going to address is what are the ways to build the positive employee experience? What are the things you need to do?**

At Warner Music Group, we’re a new team, in place less than a year, and we asked, how we build relationships and credibility. What are our fellow employees’ perceptions about what needs to happen? We started listening. We started speaking to leaders, listening to what individuals needed. And then we conducted an inclusion survey. We’re in that process right now, but we had a pretty long runway leading up to it, and now we’ll look to begin activations that will produce those outcomes.

**Nicole:** We take our own approach when it comes to employee experience with DE&I. It’s internal education for our staff to ensure staff is aware and becoming more culturally sensitive. We started doing that about five years ago here at Seasons. It’s recruiting staff that reflects the communities we serve—so we have to have a diverse staff. When we talk about promotion and retention and engagement, we have to engage every team across the board.

Also, you can’t put DE&I in one bucket, and just say it belongs to HR. Our managers are engrained in the strategic plans across the board. Those are the things we use to ensure our employees have a positive experience. Most important is making sure we’re being consistent. It can’t be a one-and-done. Let people know this is an important part of who we are as an organization.

**LaTricia:** I suggest level-setting first. We started with the basic definition, jointly created by me and some associates. We shared it among all of the people in level-setting training. My program is only two years old. Let’s set the tone, let’s set expectations and build from there.

**Janet:** One thing we have been doing more of is using a DE&I maturity model to understand where we are. We don’t want to be in a situation where we are trying to build an employee experience into the system where we really don’t have the infrastructure to do it.

**Nicole:** My experience has been that DE&I has not always been given the resources that other programs have been given. This is an opportunity for us to say, ‘Let’s talk about that.’ What type of structure do you have in place to do the work you’re doing? That is my question.

My situation is we haven’t had a team. We don’t have a team now. Now it is my job, but we don’t have a team yet. We have been able to accomplish a lot over the last five years. Every decision we are going to make is going to impact our employees, so why not involve them? We have frontline employees who are all involved in these dialogues. We are able to take the experiences we are hearing from the front lines to create and impact policies. Because a big part of our work is not just engaging the staff, but because breaking down disparities in healthcare in our communities is part of what we do, we involve the community.

**LaTricia:** We also don’t have a team. One of the things we recently did was create groups around ‘Eight Associated Impacts.’ Each of those groups has an executive sponsor. These are groups, but you don’t have to be ‘of” the group to be a member. We say many voices, one purpose. We try to establish as an inclusive an environment internally and externally as possible.

**Janet:** These responses we’ve heard illustrate the creativity of DEI professionals.

**JANET**: When our head of diversity and inclusion was being introduced, he said there were three things he needed: ‘I need to report to the CEO—I need to be in the C suite, I need a team, and I need money. We have an executive committee, made up of all c-suite leaders, and we also have regional committees, and then we have a DE&I Council at each regional branch. It’s a pyramid. We’ve created our own DE&I organization. Our ERGs are also an important role. We found we have 54 ERGs around the world. What we did is give them guidance, and organized them into umbrella ERGs, which disseminate information. It’s a cascade of information, it’s a network around the globe, but it is hard to stay on top of all that activity.

**LaTricia: The final question is around comms. It’s so important in DE&I to have effective comms, because this is marketing. The question is how do our organizations engage in communications in DE&I?**

When I started this year one goal was to connect our internal experts with our external experts. We have to be mindful we have created both internal and external comms strategies. We are conducting virtual road shows, we meet regularly with our social media teams. We have a DE&I corner in our People Team emails every week. We also started our own newsletter. It features “DE&I Gladiators”— we highlight people in our newsletter. This is not a standalone initiative, it should be integrated into the whole organization. We’re part of everything in the organization. What about you Nicole?

**Nicole:** We have to be able to tell stories. People react to storytelling. We have an internal video production team. We know we have to show representation—we have to show patients, staff, that we have diversity. In addition, we make sure we have consistent articles so we can celebrate the wins. We don’t want DE&I to feel like it’s a mountain we always have to climb. We should celebrate the wins and the milestones. We’re going to highlight the wins. It’s important that we’re showing work is getting done.

**Janet:** We have a strong relationship with our comms team. We have a DE&I hub on our website (intranet). We recorded our listening tours and panels. We do meet weekly to look at all our activations. We mobilize our ERGs to help us put on events. As a music company we have had the opportunity to engage with artists. They help curate a playlist, etc. Music moves emotions to the forefront, the musicians have been very good. We are now working on a crisis communication plan.

**Nicole: What are the best practices we want to share with the audience?**

**LaTricia:** DE&I is not a sprint, it is a marathon. There is no way we can do these things quickly. It takes everyone in the organization to bring a change.

**Janet:** The lesson learned is to not over commit and under deliver. If you can’t follow through with your actions, you are going to go down a slippery slope.

**Nicole:** If you are truly doing DE&I work, you have to have some diversity among the people making those decisions. The worst thing you do is to not have diversity there.

**Creating a Sense of Belonging in the Workplace – Do More Than Checking Off the Inclusion Box**

Amrit Nijjar, Inclusion and Belonging Manager, **Tarmac**

Becky Graebe, Senior Director, Communication Strategy, **Dynamic Signal**

*Amrit Nijjar, Tarmac:*

**What is belonging?** Where you’re relaxed, confident and hopeful. Belonging builds confidence, which ties directly to ability and productivity. Do your employees feel like this at work?

**Think about times you’ve felt like you don’t belong.** Put yourself in employees’ shoes. What steps can you take to make your workers feel like they truly belong at your company?

**Diversity is being asked to the dance, inclusion is being asked to dance.** Belonging is dancing to your own song.

**There’s more that joins us than divides us**. What are those ties that bind within your unique workforce?

**We all have a story to tell.** Ask employees questions to find out hobbies, preferences and interests. Take proactive action to find common ground – rather than harping on what divides us.

**Create ERGs for employees to find meaningful connections and community.**

To build an inclusive culture that ensures people feel like they belong:

* **It must start at the top.** Take steps to humanize your leaders. If they’re transparent and real, it signals that it’s OK for others to follow suit.
* **Establish your DE&I ambitions and objectives**. Limit your scope to what you reasonably can accomplish.
* **Be prepared to invest long-term.**
* **Be genuine (close the say-do gap).**
* **Choose progress over perfection**. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and learn along the way.

*Becky Graebe, Dynamic Signal*

**Help people find their “why?” at work.**

**A culture of belonging is about trust, acceptance and honoring people’s stories.** People will tell their stories if they trust you and you create space for them to share. “I honor all experiences in this room.”

**Where are the stories being told in your organization?** In meetings, on Slack, at town halls, on the intranet? Wherever they are, be the one to surface them and tell them.

**What are you doing to encourage and facilitate employee stories?** It doesn’t have to be a novel. Sometimes just a photo and caption will suffice.

**Make space for the giggles.** DE&I doesn’t have to be 100% somber. Don’t forget humor and levity at the workplace. There’s commonality in humor.

**Stories trump narratives.**

**Celebrate our moment of raw, real experiences.** Authenticity breeds credibility.

**Employees have more impact than ever at organizations.** Are you treating them as such?

**Everyone and every brand is transforming right now.** Use this moment to make profound, lasting change.

**It’s the perfect moment for a hard reset or strategy shift.**

**We (all of us) are responsible for DE&I progress.**

**Employees experience belonging through managers and direct peers.** If they’re not welcoming, employees won’t feel a sense of belonging.

**To be more inclusive:**

* Share meeting agendas.
* Start meetings with a story prompt.
* Be aware of who is speaking.
* Create calendar prompts to check in on employees.
* Offer a variety of feedback options.
* Tap into ERGs and “listening circles.”
* Make it easy to send and complete short Q&As.

**How to Sustain Ourselves and Our Teams as DE&I Communicators**

[Megan Fielding](https://www.ragan.com/ragan_speakers/megan-fielding/?id=288937), Vice President Brand & Culture Communications, **Nutrien**

[Leela Stake](https://www.ragan.com/ragan_speakers/leela-stake/?id=288937). Senior Partner & Co-Lead for True MOSAIC DE&I Practice, **FleishmanHillard**

**Megan & Leela’s learnings during the past year**:

* Curiosity to understand cultural nuances.
* Investment in DE&I and building a DE&I team.
* Formalizing the DE&I practice, called True MOSAIC, at FleishmanHillard.
* Developing programs with people who have lived experiences to guide the learning.
* Self care is key. It’s can feel like a sprint and a marathon. The panelists are doing meaningful work, but it can also be draining and emotional. It’s important to find ways to recharge and rejuvenate.
* Treating your organization as a client and recognize you’re on a journey as well. Before we jump into a meeting, ask “How are you?” How are you feeling?” Check in with how people are doing. You’ll get better results by checking in vs. diving into work at the start of every meeting.
* Have empathy for one another.

**What are some ways to practice allyship?**

* Look for opportunities to help out behind the scenes to, for example, help a colleague feel confident heading into a meeting.
* Have an open dialogue about struggles and create a safe space to have those conversations.
* Remember that you need allies, and you need to be allies.
* Have those tough conversation. Clients are paying you to tell them what they need to hear, not what they want to hear.
* Celebrate small wins to mark small steps forward as teams and broadly as an organization to reinforce optimism.

**How to support teams and staff lacking inclusivity in the workplace?**

* Create open platforms where employees can share conversations.
* Encourage staff to take mental health days. Mental health is as important as physical health.
* Find allies and a space where you can talk about your feelings.

**How do you broach mental health in a way that feels meaningful?**

* If you see a colleague who may be struggling, say “You’ve been working hard—take the day off.” Or, “You look like you need a break. Take a few days.”
* Volunteer to step in and try to be helpful. Take a few tasks off a colleague’s plate.
* Ask “How are you?” It’s okay to not be okay.