

This week in DEI: April 19

April 19, 2022 | By [TOOLKITS](#) | Reading time: 9 minutes

In this issue:

- **NPR and WaPo release demographic data about their newsrooms**, but a lack of participation in an industry-wide diversity survey points to a shaky future for industry diversity reporting.
- PR Week's annual salary survey points to **an enduring pay gap between men and women in PR roles**.
- A minority-owned independent agency is **setting a new standard when it comes to representation of diverse voices**.
- What a new NYC law mandating **pay transparency** could mean for the media and marketing industry.
- **Efforts to combat ageism at advertising agencies**.

7

A big week for diversity data from newsrooms

This week, [NPR](#) released data on its diversity demographics for 2021, while [The Washington Post Guild](#), The Washington Post's employee union, released similar demographic data spanning from 2016 to 2021. Here are some breakdowns of the numbers.

For NPR:

- **Its overall staff was 62% white and 38% POC in 2021.**
- **55% identified as women, 44% as men**, and 1% as trans/nonbinary/gender-nonconforming.
- **NPR's executive team was 47% white and 53% POC** – an increase of 9% for POC executives since 2019.
- **78% of NPR's new hires were POC**, up from 51% in 2020 and 48% in 2019.
- **NPR's staff has become more diverse than its audience**: 80% of NPR listeners are white, and the median age of an NPR listener is 58. Unless NPR can attract a more young and diverse audience, the organization is going to have sustainability issues, says Will Lee, NPR's COO.

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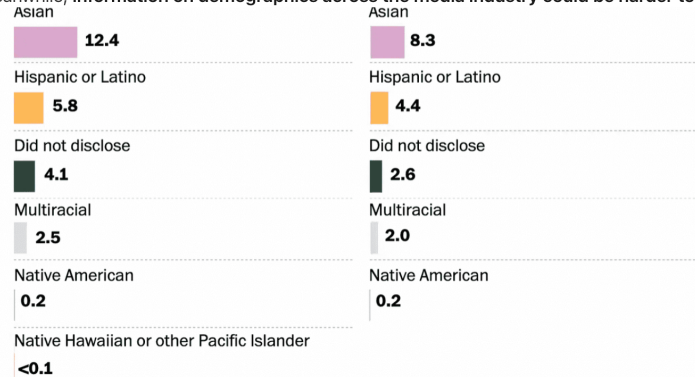
For WaPo:

- **The Post's overall staff was 56% white, 19% Black, 12% Asian and 6% Hispanic/Latino in 2021.**
- **WaPo leadership was 67% white and 31% non-white** (2% of leadership respondents did not disclose their race).
- **Over the past five years, the percentage of white employees and white leadership at the Post has remained unchanged**, even though staff numbers have dramatically increased... and the percentage of Black employees has decreased, down 6% overall and 4% in

leadership roles.

- The median pay rate for men was higher than for women, and higher for white employees than non-white employees. A pay breakdown by race was unavailable, but women made on average 13% less than men.

Meanwhile, information on demographics across the media industry could be harder to



Source: [Washington Post demographic report \(2021\)](#)

Meanwhile, information on demographics across the media industry could be harder to

come by if media companies fail to share their data more proactively, [Nieman Lab](#) reports.

The lead researcher for the News Leaders Association's annual diversity survey recently stepped down after the initiative was paused in 2020 due to "disappointingly low participation rates." Researchers hoped that the racial reckoning of 2020 around George Floyd's murder would prompt more organizations to again complete the survey, but the 2021 completion numbers were even lower than those in 2019 (303 orgs to 2019's 429). The survey's exiting lead researcher, Meredith Clark, said the **decline in participation is linked to news organizations not wanting to hear hard truths** about their demographics: "You don't get to transparency about diversity by relying on people's goodwill."

Related: S. Mitra Kalita gave an interview on News Media Alliance's [News Take podcast](#),

where she explained that she believes the only way to sustain the push for increased media diversity initiatives is for **organizational leadership to publically host uncomfortable conversations**, and display vulnerability in admitting to gaps in their learning.

Brenda D. Wilkerson writes for [Forbes](#) about how media and tech companies can diversify their workforces, starting with recruitment outside of traditional "bubbles," such as at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), women's colleges, and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs). She also argues that **employers should consider a nontraditional resume path as an asset rather than a detriment**.

The PR gender pay gap

PRWeek released the results of its [2022 Salary Survey](#), and it contains some telling numbers related to gender-based pay discrepancies:

Men in PR roles are making 24% more than women in 2022. That gap is noticeably lower than 2021, when men made on average 30% more than women, but remains substantial. The survey results also pointed to men earning more than women even when they hold the exact same position at a company – and even when that position is part of a company's senior leadership.

80% of survey respondents said they want flexible work hours, specifically so they can meet their caregiving responsibilities. But only 42% of employees reported they were currently allowed to have a flexible schedule. 61% of employees also reported preferring a hybrid schedule, with some components of in-office work and some components of remote

work – but again, only around 40% of employees have that option. PR organizations may want to consider their benefits and scheduling systems if they want to retain employees with caregiving responsibilities, who disproportionately identify as women.

Indie agency Crossmedia as a case study in representation

The independent agency Crossmedia (XM) boasts some significant diversity demographic amongst its staff, reports [AdWeek](#). The agency, whose founder and CEO, Kamran Asghar, is Pakistani, has put in a concerted effort to recruit and retain a diverse staff, and it is paying off.

- **XM's leadership team is 50% women and 33% POC.**
- **52% of its managerial staff (one level below the executive suite) are also women**, and 24% of those women identify as women of color.
- **Overall, the agency's staff is 59% women and 34% POC.**

The agency is continuing its efforts to diversify, which employees report are inherent and organic within the company. XM has set up a six-week mentorship program for 60+ high school sophomores from marginalized communities, and it offers college internships to the students who graduate from the program. Asghar reports that XM regularly completes a demographic analysis of company leadership, as well as a pay equity analysis, so that they are always keeping DEI concerns at the forefront of their operations. Other agencies may take cues from XM and begin implementing similar initiatives to boost their recruitment and retention efforts around marginalized staff.

Pay transparency is coming. Are media and marketing companies prepared?

New York City recently passed [legislation](#) requiring all employers with four or more employees to include salary ranges in their postings for open positions. [CNBC](#) reports business groups are arguing that this change could hurt their DEI recruitment efforts, saying that they need to offer high salaries to attract scarce women and BIPOC talent, but that including a high maximum salary on a public job posting could lead to dissatisfaction and retention issues with current employees. Advocacy groups are pushing back, pointing out the pay gap in NYC for women in particular is actually worsening over time, with women making 86 cents for every man's dollar, down from 89 cents seven years ago.

[Refinery29](#) notes that pay transparency reduces two of the top causes of employee burnout: insufficient reward, and absence of fairness. Victoria M. Walker, a former Senior Travel Reporter at The Points Guy who wrote [a viral tweet](#) about her salary when she left the company, said pay transparency just makes sense for media organizations: "We demand transparency from sources, we demand transparency from government entities...why can't we be transparent about what we make?"

Discussions around pay transparency are raising the specter of the infamous [anonymous salary spreadsheet](#), created in 2019 as a way for agency employees to anonymously share their salaries, along with demographic information, which highlighted racial and gender pay gaps within the industry. Now that such efforts are beginning to be formalized in legislation, agencies may have to reckon with increased employee knowledge and conversation around one of the biggest recruitment and retention factors: compensation.

Ageism at advertising agencies

It's another one of the more "invisible" DEI concepts: ageism, or discrimination towards older employees. Marketing and advertising agencies are beginning to take steps to combat the tendency to favor younger employees within the industry. [Digiday](#) reports that it can be difficult for employees over the age of 40 to find jobs in advertising and marketing, where the focus tends to be on youth and "fresh thinking." 100 Roses From Concrete, a nonprofit network, is working to change that focus by pioneering a mentorship program for older employees. The program pairs seven mentees over the age of 40 (with some as old as 50) with mentors at

various agencies and brands for a 12-week virtual mentoring collaboration, with the expectation that the agencies will hire the mentees after the program's completion.

In another [Digiday](#) piece, a senior creative director spoke on condition of anonymity about the ageism they have faced in the industry, as someone nearly 60 years old with 20+ years of experience. The CD said they began lying on their resume and saying they had less experience than they actually had in order to find work. They suggested agencies' preference for younger employees may also be based on other aspects of ageism, such as older employees potentially requiring more accommodations due to disabilities. Regardless of the motivation, the senior creative director argued that ageism is hurting agencies, as they are missing out on employees with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Related: Melissa Robertson writes for [AdAge](#) about ways agencies can support older employees who are experiencing menopause. She argues that creating clear menopause policies, with language around time off and other workplace accommodations, is the first step towards creating an inclusive culture where employees do not feel ashamed of natural changes taking place within their bodies.

Other notable reads:

- The creative agency Eleven has hired three women, two of whom are Black, for executive positions as part of a company-wide shift to a new focus on reflection and "pressing pause," reports [AdWeek](#). Kristina Jenkins will serve as chief strategy officer, Juliette Garaghy as executive creative director, and Andrea Ogunbadejo as head of production.
- Bilingual and multilingual employees are in high demand, reports [WorkLife](#). Katie Soo, CMO at KiwiCo, argues that **bilingualism is a key skill in crafting campaigns across cultures**, when linguistic nuance can make a difference.
- [Harvard Business Review](#) has a take on non-apology apologies for DEI mess-ups, which can be especially damaging for media and marketing companies **who portray themselves as skilled communicators**.

Why credit matters: Agencies must recognize where ideas come from

from [HBR](#): how to integrate antiracism into daily company practices.