Why did so many creative teams strive to reach the summit in the 2022 EXCEL Awards competition?

Because it's there.
MISSION CRITICAL: SOCIAL GOOD AS A CORE BUSINESS PRINCIPLE

INVESTING IN WELL-BEING, SOCIAL ISSUES IS AN INVESTMENT IN SUCCESS

BY AL RICKARD, CAE

Contributing to the social good is a mantra for today’s successful organizations, including associations, for-profit companies, and media groups.

Elizabeth Green, CEO and founder of Brief Media, tells a fascinating story about a partnership to advance an important cause. As the opening keynote address at AMPify, her talk — Mission Critical: Social Good as a Core Business Principle — was an inspiring example of how serendipity led to a meaningful and productive business relationship that makes a difference in the world.

The Social Imperative

“So why social good?” Green asks. “There is a lot of pressure right now on organizations to do good in the world. There has been a gradual, yet constant, focus on social good over the past decade. However, in this era of the Great Resignation, the rate of change and the necessity of social purpose to retain employees have accelerated dramatically. Previously, companies focused on social good were more hip and cool. Today, it is becoming essential to attract and retain employees.”

She stresses that the effort has to become part of your mission, your culture, not just a marketing campaign. “Believe in what you’re doing. Make it matter. Make it about something your stakeholders care about that will be sustainable over a long period of time. Be authentic and make sure it’s not just a checkbox for doing something good.”

Aligning your organization with the right cause will energize your membership, audience, and stakeholders. As they become more involved with your efforts, they do more good, which helps spread your message, which attracts more attention, which encourages more involvement, and so on.

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ELIZABETH GREEN, CEO, Brief Media

Vets, Pets, and People

Finding the right cause is crucial. “Our vision is to guide the most critical decisions in veterinary medicine,” Green says, explaining that Brief Media is a leading veterinary company that develops practical peer-reviewed educational content and point-of-care tools for more than 259,000 veterinary professionals worldwide.

One day while having lunch with a business partner, Green learned of the ongoing fight against rabies. “He mentioned that between 50,000 and 100,000 people die every year of rabies, predominantly in Africa and
WE ARE THE CHANGE MAKERS
MARCOMM LEADERS CREATING, LEADING CHANGE FOR DEI
BY JEN SILBER

In 2021, AM&P Network introduced the Equity Award, a new award to highlight the outstanding work of members committed to antiracism and elevating equity across the organizations, associations, and industries they represent.

At AMPLIFY 2022, Associations Council President Stacy Brooks Whatley, director of marketing and communications at the American Physiological Society and editor in chief of The Physiologist magazine, led a discussion with finalists from the inaugural award.

Representatives from two of these organizations offered insights into how they are driving meaningful progress in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. The session — We Are the Change Makers: How Association Pros Are Driving Multilevel DEI Progress — featured Bibiana Campos Seijo, of the American Chemical Society, vice president of C&EN Media Group, and editor in chief of C&EN; and Billy Williams, executive vice president for ethics, diversity, and inclusion at the American Geophysical Union. AGU was the recipient of the inaugural Equity Award.

“Over the years, we’ve brought in speakers on various aspects of DEI — people who have brought great advice, important perspectives. With this panel, we’re tapping our own people. Not only are we learning from each other, but we’re also rededicating our support of DEI,” Whatley says. “It’s not just something that’s important to some of us, something we should be talking about. It’s something our fellow members are doing. Our peers in Associations Council are changing our industry.”

The discussion was thorough and wide-ranging, but the presenters generally agreed on three essential concepts:
1. **No one can do everything. But everyone should be able to do something.**

   Williams says AGU’s work happens in partnership with other institutions and organizations. AGU shares its goals and data with anyone who needs it, no matter where they are in their DEI process. One of the key elements of DEI success, he said, is multi-institutional partnerships.

   Seijo points out that big changes can start with a few people speaking up. ACS’s Trailblazers program, which highlights rising members from under-represented communities, happened because the magazine staff felt it was important to do—not because she told them it needed to be done. The ACS inclusivity guide was developed by a committee of volunteers. Because people felt strongly about getting it done, they were able to do it.

2. **This is work — it will take time and energy. Don’t expect overnight results.**

   Whatley cautions people not to be discouraged if their efforts seem smaller or slower than the programs highlighted by the Equity Award finalists. “The programs you’re putting together and that you have passion for are what we should be celebrating,” she says. “You don’t have to be a rock star.”

   “One of the things I’m proudest of at AGU is that we have a policy-based foundation that helps provide the coverage for everything we do,” Williams says. If an organization’s mission statement mentions the principle that DEI is an essential element of success, staff don’t have to ask for approvals or permission when doing something in a new, more inclusive, way. “Not only did we change our policy, but we also changed our practices; this is one of the first big changes toward cultural change.”

   Seijo said ACS develops its editorial calendar with a diverse range of feature subjects in mind. “There’s a standard we need to set for ourselves, and we need to apply it consistently.”

3. **Stick to your principles.**

   There may be negative reactions to the visible changes, which is why it’s helpful to have diversity principles stated in your organization’s mission statement or core values. “When it comes to DEI, I don’t think you should need to have a business case,” Seijo says, “because it’s the right thing to do. And if your organization doesn’t think so, maybe you should reconsider whether that’s the organization for you.”

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**BIBIANA CAMPOS SEIJO,**
American Chemical Society

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**BILLY WILLIAMS,**
American Geophysical Union

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**Jen Silber** is senior editor at American Staffing Association. She began her career with a foray in dot-com publishing but has now been working as an editor in the association world for nearly 25 years. She’d generally rather be where the weather is cold.
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AMPLIFY 2023
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- **Peer-to-Peer Problem & Solutions Sessions.** Bring your top publishing challenges and ideas to this interactive session to share with and learn from your peers.
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