



Uncommon Chords:  
Uncommon Voices

'Lessons Learned'

National Association of Minority Media Executives  
Annual Convention  
Le Meridien Hotel  
Chicago, ILL  
July 12 – 14, 2005

## Politics & Race in America

- ✓ Newsrooms need to reflect society, because reporters & editors of color see stories that Whites don't see.
- ✓ Beware of the 'code words' media adopts that try to "color" race, but often are direct attacks on a particular ethnic group. (e.g. Ward Connerly's "Equal Opportunity Act" was designed to roll back any legislation enabling affirmative action)
- ✓ Don't underestimate the power of ethnic media because increasingly in many cities they are in greater touch with what's really going on in a city than mainstream media.

## Leveraging Diversity

- ✓ By 2050, white people will be a minority.
- ✓ Diversity efforts have to be described in business terms, not just in human resources terms
- ✓ Diversity efforts must be completely intertwined with the overall corporate philosophy and goals from the Board of Directors to the CEO to the supervisors to the employees
- ✓ Become a 'transparent' organization so that all employees know how to get ahead, to succeed.
- ✓ Consider diversity as a quality of leadership.
- ✓ Hire a diverse team and engage them in all aspects of the organization. Allow them to help you better understand how to reach emerging markets: A diverse team allows you to have diverse ideas.
- ✓ Compensate executives for their ability to create a more diverse organization
- ✓ Growing your company's business in the African-American, Hispanic and Asian communities is big business. e.g. For Allstate, one point in market share of the African American market equals \$150 million in business.
- ✓ Create diversity initiatives that create results. "Focus on walking the walk."
- ✓ Create an 'open door' policy that enables all employees to talk to senior level executives about diversity issues.

## Newsmaker Luncheon – Maryland Senatorial Candidate Kweisi Mfume

- ✓ Media consolidation is a threat to ensuring that there will always be a 'diversity of voices'
- ✓ Consolidation is limiting the number of opportunities for minority owners and may limit the number of stories, television programs about diverse people.
- ✓ Competition among media companies is driving the growth of new technologies that is allowing people to get news and information in new ways (e.g. streaming video over cell phones).

- ✓ If elected to the U.S. Senate, Mfume said he'd work to preserve or create laws to protect the 'diversity of voices'.

### Technology & the Media

- ✓ What are the key things that will ensure that today's media will be around tomorrow:
  - Stop being so boring. Think about kinds of stories a segment of the population who is not using your media might be interested in.
  - Start segmenting your audiences. Get a grip on the way they live, what they're really interested in. Help them 'live' their lives, solve problems... don't just tell them.
  - Encourage all facets of your organization to get out of the office and get in touch with their audiences.
  - Invest in technology
  - Establish a mission and go for it.
- ✓ Only 9% of young people (18-34) believe newspapers are trustworthy, and an alarming number don't consider traditional media of any kind as their primary source of news and information. This group gets most of their info from their friends.
- ✓ Traditional media has to be flexible and adapt to the changing demographics. That will start when they hire people who have different types of skills. This workforce must have a 'broader media imagination'. They also must be:
  - Willing to adjust to constant change (an attribute most media workforces are resistant.)
  - Willing to multitask: report, write, take a digital picture, shoot some digital video.
  - Willing to become a 'producer' who is able to conceive stories across various media

### Managing Visibility – Laura Morgan Roberts

- ✓ You are the author of your own story.
- ✓ Toot your own horn.
- ✓ Know when to be in the 'spotlight' and when not to be.
- ✓ Understand what you want to be made visible.
- ✓ Know that if you're in the spotlight, you will get recognized, energized but with that comes tension, pressure and potential attacks from others who feel shunned.
- ✓ With the spotlight, there is little room for failure.
- ✓ You can't appear competent, if you are not competent.
- ✓ Make decisions on what you want to create; what you want to achieve
- ✓ Develop a long term strategy on YOUR values and goals.
- ✓ Decide in advance how far you want to go
- ✓ Leverage your diversity to your advantage. As a diverse individual, you

- will stand out. Remember, 'standing up means standing out'.
- ✓ Create a personal board of directors: your 'developmental network'
- ✓ When the moment comes for you to do your job, JUST DO IT!
- ✓ Authenticity is not optional. You are only deluding yourself if you're Think you can be inauthentic for a long period of time.
- ✓ Love your work.
- ✓ Become extraordinary.

#### Work Smarter, Not Harder – Peggy Duncan

(Derived from her handout distributed at the conference).

- ✓ PURGE often .
- ✓ Give everything a home.
- ✓ Keep everything you need in a convenient location.
- ✓ Find the right kind of storage unit.
- ✓ Ask yourself these critical questions when you're trying to trash stuff:
  - When did I use it last?
  - Can I get info some place else?
  - If I thrown something out, will I be able to live with the consequences of having thrown something out?
- ✓ Set goals and priorities
- ✓ Streamline your work.
- ✓ Learn technology and use it to your advantage.

#### Opening Reception: Carlos Watson – CNN

- ✓ Be creative.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to take risks.
- ✓ CNN continues to evolve searching for the right balance of news, analysis and features.
- ✓ Follow your dreams – even if it means your family may think you're crazy.
- ✓ Whatever you do, never under estimate the power of sales.

#### Rethinking the Traditional Business Model

- ✓ Accept the reality that we're in a world where people want information whenever they want it, wherever they can get it.
- ✓ Consumers now have the power to get the information; it's no longer the media companies.
- ✓ Companies of the future are going to look at a 'cradle to grave' media strategies (e.g. Viacom) providing content/products for all age groups
- ✓ At the end of the day, stay focused on the fact that humans – people – are the constant – no matter what the latest technological trend is.
- ✓ While globalization is here to stay, most people still want – and need – local information. Don't lose sight of that.

- ✓ Content is king. As broadband becomes even more ubiquitous, so will the possibility that Yahoo! could become the 'fifth network'.
- ✓ The next 'big idea' has to have a broad appeal. If it's too niche, it will have a tough time succeeding.
- ✓ Got an idea. Make it simple enough for people to understand it. Create a website. Copyright it. And if people understand what's on the website, then you might have something.

### The Business of Hip Hop

- ✓ Unless you're over 30, you don't know a time when there wasn't HipHop.
- ✓ Hip Hop is a lifestyle, it's beyond a genre of music.
- ✓ It's not rebellious. It's a trillion dollar business that is about real jobs, real opportunities.
- ✓ Hip Hop is a form of expression that has given voice to the disenfranchised.
- ✓ If you're to go after the Hip Hop market, do your homework. Just don't think a hip hop group including your brand in a song is effective. Look at the successful campaigns of Polaroid and Outkast (generated increased sales); Heinken and the U.S. Tennis Association.
- ✓ Hire people on your staff who not only understand hip hop but also understand what to do.

### Newsmaker Luncheon Speaker - Michael Eric Dyson

- ✓ I'm not a comedian; I'm a social critic.
- ✓ Bill Cosby has refused to talk about race until now. And the problem is that he's missing the other side of the story.
- ✓ This is another case of the "Afrostrocracy" v. the 'Ghettocracy'. Where the black middle class criticizes the lower class. That's been going on since the 1870s, when blacks began migrating to places like Chicago.
- ✓ My book is about the continuing of the intra-race conflict and Cosby is used as the jumping off point to try to get black people to focus on the real issues affecting black people.
- ✓ Cosby doesn't want to have a debate about the book or what he said, but he wants to continue to go on his 'beat up the poor' tour.
- ✓ Why should the litmus test be on how to deal with kids in bad schools as opposed to doing something about raising the bar with the schools they attend?
- ✓ Here's what the truth is:
  - Preschool and afterschool programs work
  - Go to the prisons and talk to the people who are there and you'll have a greater understanding of what's going on in their lives, their communities.

- You become what you see and here: If all our children see and hear is a hip hop music video, then that's what they believe. And abroad, that's what people take hold of the image of black people.
- Black preachers are more dangerous than Hip Hoppers because many avoid taking on the real issues and instead focus on raising tens of millions of dollars for sanctuaries and lining their pockets.