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MASTER OF NONPROFIT ADMINISTRATION

How America's Largest Nonprofit and For-Profit Corporations are Communicating CSR and DEI

An analysis of how the two sectors are demonstrating commitment to CSR and DEI through their most public-facing communications outlets.

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INTRODUCTION

- Rise in social, environmental and political activism over the last few years
- Growing urgency to address social, environmental, and racial issues
- Increased pressure on large corporations
 - both for-profit and nonprofit
- General distrust of large corporations
- Questions of authenticity of efforts being made



OVERVIEW



Focus on the Big Guys

Analyze America's largest for-profit and nonprofit corporations' DEI and CSR communications.

When money and resources aren't an issue, what's the excuse?



Looking at Key Communications Outlets

Survey for DEI and CSR content present on their *Websites, Job Listings, Reporting*, as well as *Social Media*

Also measuring level of commitment and effectiveness



Why External Communications and Social Media

Publicly available information.

Measuring commitment through strategic communications.

Social media as a more interactive platform to engage with audiences.

PURPOSE - OBJECTIVES

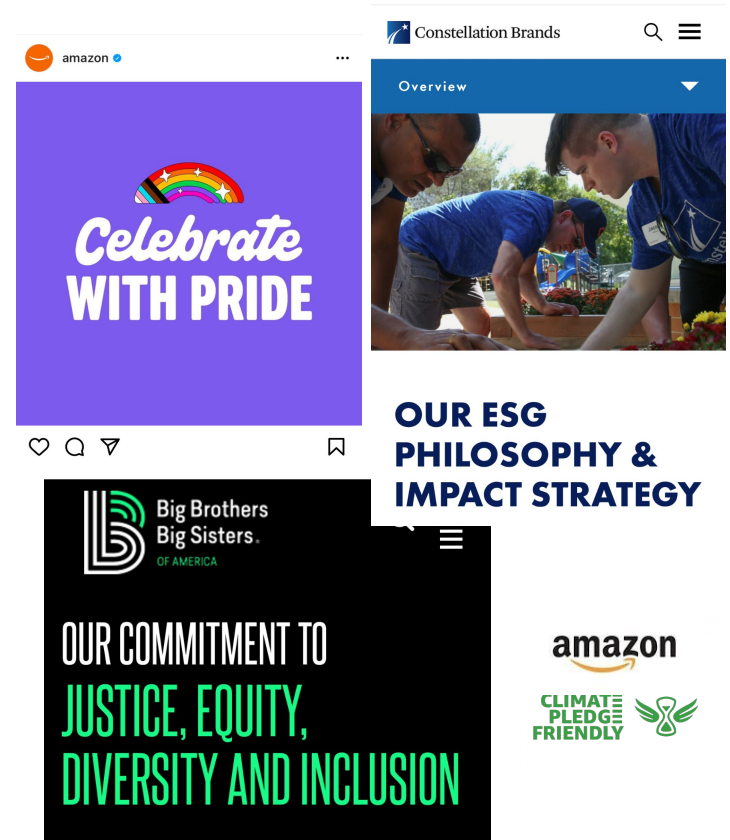
- ▶ Determine if and how larger corporations are listening to the public demand for Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts

Real impact vs. performative/greenwashing:
understanding what is genuine

- ▶ Identifying trends across sectors.

Is one sector more diligent than the other?

- ▶ Understand how large corporations are using their social influence for public betterment



Selection Process for Corporations:

Using Nonprofit Times 100 and Fortune 500 lists, select corporations from the 5th, 50th, and 75th percentiles:

For-profit: Amazon, Wayfair, Constellation Brands

Nonprofit: United Way, PBS, and

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

METHODS



External Communications: Measuring CSR/DEI Content

Use content analysis to look at Website, Job Listings, and Reporting for DEI & CSR Content

1pt = CSR/DEI content present with strong messaging

0.5 pt = CSR/DEI content loosely present

0pt = No CSR/DEI content present

Social Media: Measuring Dedicated CSR/DEI Posts

Counting DEI/CSR-related posts on Instagram over a 1 year period for each corporation (May 1 2021-April 30, 2022).

➔ Looking at actionable posts (CTAs) and advocacy months to determine authenticity of public commitment to DEI and CSR

External Communications: Criteria

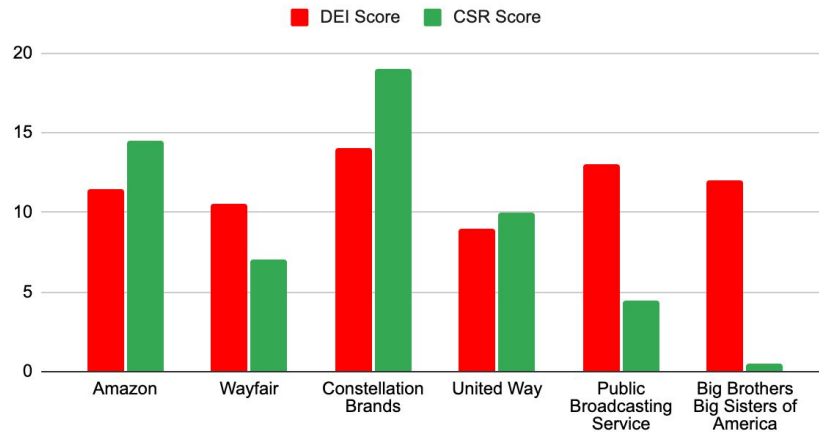
WEBSITE	
Home Page	Website home page contains CSR/ DEI-related messaging
Navigation Bar	Website contains CSR/DEI-related tab on drop down menu in navigation bar
Website Footer	Website contains CSR/DEI-related links in footer
Dedicated Page(s)	Website contains dedicated page(s) to CSR/DEI
Partnerships	Website contains partnerships related to CSR/DEI
Career Page	Website contains career page with DEI/CSR-related messaging
Mission Statement	Website contains DEI/CSR messaging in mission statement
About Us	Website contains DEI/CSR messaging in about us page
Other	Website contains other DEI/CSR resources

JOB LISTING	
Statement*	Job listings contain DEI/CSR statement <i>*if statement is listed at top of page, weighted more than bottom of page</i>
Inclusive	Job listings contain <i>inclusive</i> DEI/CSR statements.
Jobs Available	Job listings contain DEI/CSR-related jobs
Dedicated Department	Job listings indicate departments dedicated to DEI/CSR
Mission Statement	Job listings contain mission statement related to DEI/CSR
Other	Job listings contain other DEI/CSR-related messaging/content

REPORTING	
Formal Report	There are formal DEI/CSR reports available
Consistency	The corporation has been reporting DEI/CSR for 3+ years
Accredited	The corporation uses an accredited DEI/CSR reporting system
Clear, Measurable Goals	The corporation includes clear, measurable goals rather than statements
Awards	DEI/CSR-related awards have been received by the corporation
Expert Review	The corporation seeks expert input to support DEI/CSR reports
Other	The corporation provides other resources to support DEI/CSR reporting

External Communications: Website, Job Listings, and Reporting

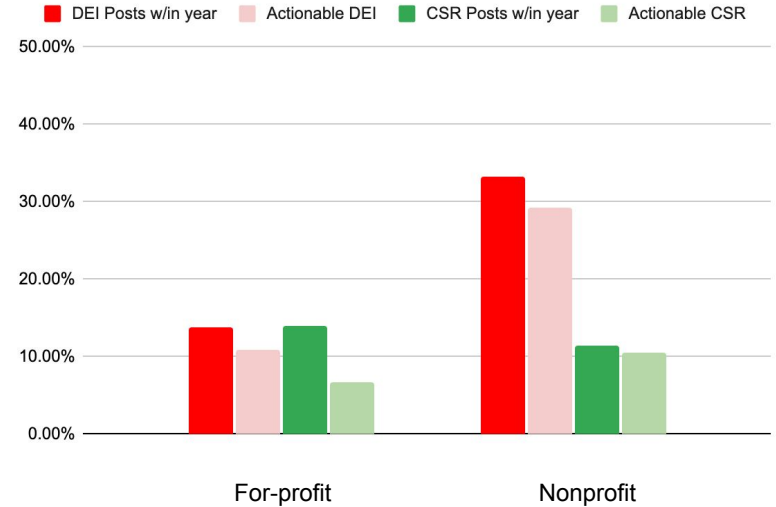
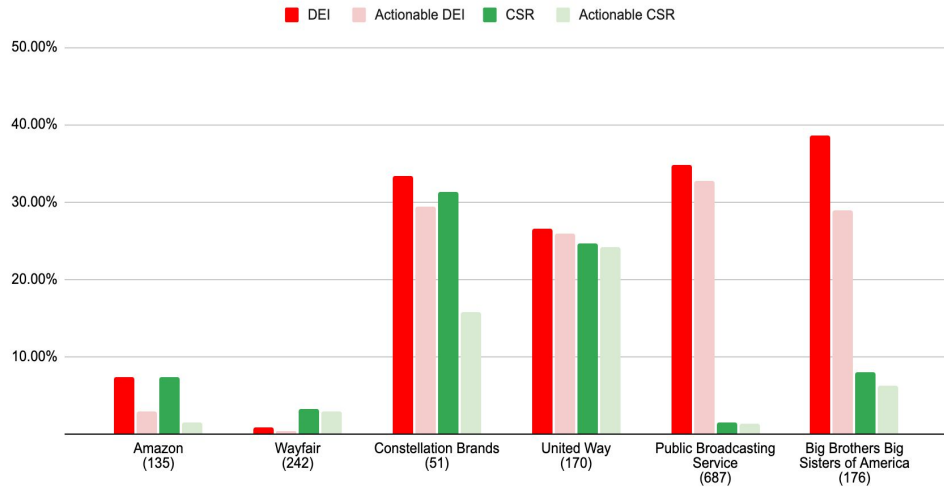
DEI Score and CSR Score



- Same average scores for DEI overall from both sectors, but the for-profit sector is much stronger in CSR
 - Nonprofits are doing way more for DEI, but not communicating it
- While for-profits scored higher in CSR, greenwashing was very prevalent through:
 - Sustainability certifications, selective language, unmeasurable goals/statements
- Very little DEI reporting from both sectors.
- For-profit had more far CSR/DEI content and messaging in Job Listing criteria

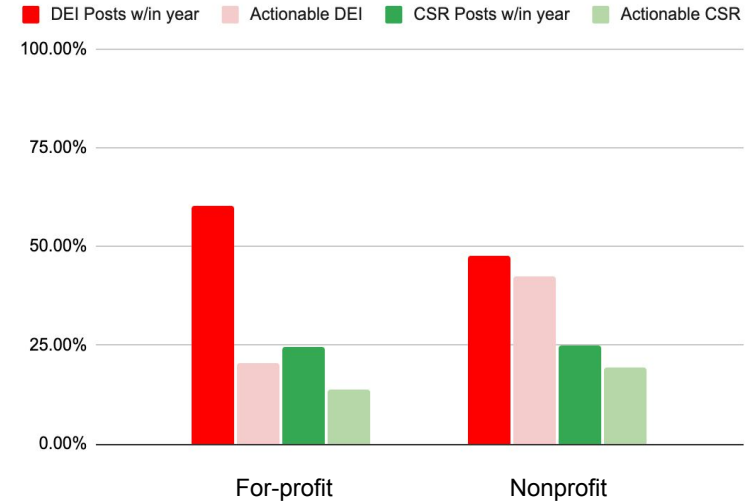
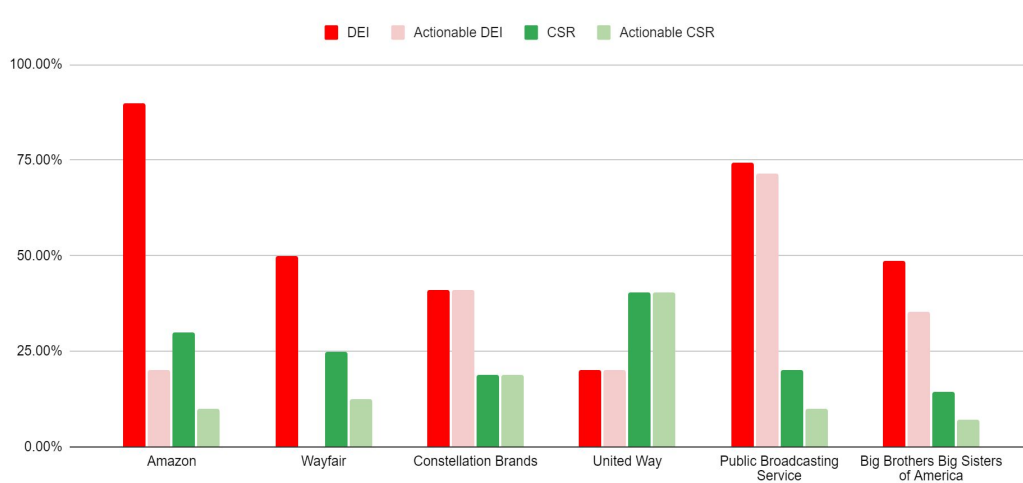
NONPROFIT AVG SCORE: 8.7 / FOR-PROFIT AVG. SCORE: 12.2

Social Media: Percent of DEI & CSR Posts on Social Media Within Last Year



- Closer correlation to color coded bars signifies consistency in CSR/DEI posts with CTAs
→ Higher commitment to DEI/CSR

Social Media: Percent of DEI & CSR Posts on Social Media Made within *Advocacy Months*



- Higher bars signify most of corporation's overall DEI/CSR posts in the last year were made during advocacy months
- Larger gaps between correlated colors means a post was made, but without a CTA or actionable resource
→ Doesn't effectively communicate commitment and reads as performative

IMPLICATIONS

For-profits are communicating CSR and DEI better through external communications, but nonprofits are showing stronger commitment to DEI on social media.

Nonprofits are still not prioritizing CSR enough through external communications and social media.

Talking is not enough; there needs to be more *measurable* goals and actions to show true commitment.

Greenwashing is still very prevalent amongst for-profit corporations

Overall commitment to CSR and DEI is still low amongst both nonprofit and for-profit corporations, based on actionable and dedicated communications.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Both sectors need to be held to higher standards of CSR and DEI reporting to increase credibility and public trust.



Create more actionable dialogues with corporations' specific involvement in CSR and DEI through social media and external communications.



Prioritize DEI and CSR language on job listings and invest in dedicated jobs and departments related to CSR and DEI.



Integrate CSR and DEI into business/development models rather than relying on strategic communications to prove true commitment.

Thank You!

Questions?

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How America's Largest Nonprofit and For-Profit Corporations are Communicating CSR and DEI

An analysis of how the two sectors are prioritizing CSR and DEI through their most public-facing communications outlets.

Colette Zepponi, MNA - Master of Nonprofit Administration - Capstone Project

SUMMARY

This research will be centered around a content analysis of DEI and CSR external communications strategies from a selection of companies pulled from the Fortune 500 and Nonprofit Times 100 lists. It will look closely at some of the wealthiest for-profit and nonprofit corporations to analyze how they are incorporating CSR and DEI into their communications to measure each sectors' level of commitment and assess how each of the sectors could learn from one another.

The content analysis will look at key external communications outlets: social media, website content, job postings, reports, and any other public-facing materials to measure how CSR and DEI are being prioritized through organizations' strategic communications and with what level of commitment. We will look at 3 major for-profit corporations and 3 major nonprofit organizations to analyze their external communications around DEI and CSR and determine if one sector is more diligent than the other in prioritizing DEI and CSR through their external communications efforts, and what could be done to strengthen investment in CSR and DEI across both sectors.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to measure DEI and CSR efforts and commitment across two sectors with seemingly different initiatives- to make a profit, and to serve a cause- on an even playing field to determine if and how larger corporations are listening to the public demand for Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts. It will differentiate communications between real impact vs. performative activism/greenwashing to understand what efforts are a genuine reflection of the corporations' dedication to these initiatives. Extensive data has been collected and strategically analyzed to assess for greenwashing and performative activism in order to effectively measure each corporation, and sector, commitment to DEI and CSR.

I will be focusing on what communications strategies are most effective in proving genuine commitment to DEI and CSR, and how both sectors can invest in these matters more holistically. The goal is to determine how the nonprofit and for-profit sectors are prioritizing DEI and CSR initiatives in their business and development models through strategic communications.

RESEARCH

I will analyze and compare 6 corporations' external communications pertaining to DEI and CSR, with each of the organizations being selected from the Fortune 500 and Nonprofit 100 publications. I will compare the commitment to DEI and CSR of these 6 for-profit and nonprofit corporations using 2 analyses. The first analysis will focus on the CSR and DEI content present in each corporation's Website, Job Listings, and Reporting, and the second analysis will focus on Instagram social media content.

Research Questions:

- How are nonprofit and for-profit corporations' CSR and DEI commitments reflected in their external communications?
- Has one sector been more diligent than the other regarding DEI and CSR communications and/or reporting, and if so, how?
 - Are there any obvious trends amongst for-profit vs. nonprofit corporations in DEI and CSR communications and reporting?
- What level of commitment to DEI and CSR has been demonstrated in organizations' social media communications efforts?
 - How authentically do they offer other forms of external communications?
 - Which corporations are most effective in communicating DEI and CSR strategies? What are they doing right?
- How can the 2 sectors learn from one another regarding DEI and CSR efforts, and how they effectively communicate them to the public?

METHODS

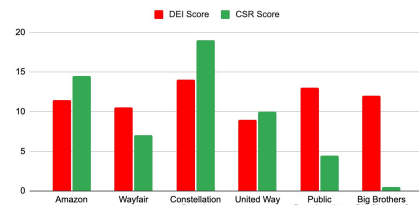
A content analysis will be conducted to survey the amount of DEI/CSR-related content present on various subcategories of these 3 external communication platforms (website, job listings, and reporting). The analysis will focus on the number of categorical values represented from each corporation's public-facing external communications by simply marking the categories where DEI/CSR messaging/content is present and tallying up the final results. There will be 2 possible values (X and x) given to weigh the level of authenticity in DEI/CSR-related content.

Social media will be measured in a separate manner from websites, job listings, and reporting due to its interactive nature. We will measure the number of dedicated posts related to CSR and/or DEI over the past year (May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022) on each corporation's Instagram account. This study will look specifically at Instagram due to the cultural relevance of this platform amongst the Millennial and Gen-Z audiences. Lastly, we will count how many of the DEI and CSR posts were within an advocacy month (Pride Month, Black History Month, etc.) and how many of those were actionable.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

External Communications: Websites, Job Listings, and Reporting

DEI Score and CSR Score



Average Score by Sector

Sector	DEI Score	CSR Score
For-Profit	12.0	11.5
Non-Profit	11.3	5.0

Social Media: DEI & CSR-Related Posts



Social Media: DEI & CSR-Related Posts within Advocacy Months



Social Media: Percent of DEI & CSR Posts on Social Media Made within Advocacy Months

RESULTS

External Communications

- Same average scores for DEI overall from both sectors, but the for-profit sector is much stronger in CSR
 - Nonprofits are doing way more for DEI, but not communicating it
- While for-profits scored higher in CSR, greenwashing was very prevalent through:
 - Sustainability certifications, selective language, unmeasurable goals/statements
- Very little DEI reporting from both sectors.
- Nonprofits not reporting DEI, for-profits only started formal reporting in last year or two, but follow their own system
- For-profit had more far CSR content and messaging
 - Jobs & departments, dedicated pages, partnerships
- For-profit corporations are talking about DEI directly, but without a CTA or actionable inclusive language
 - Nonprofits inconsistent in the presence of DEI content
- DEI very present on nonprofits websites, but not formally communicated
- For-profits were including diversity statements on all job listings and on career pages, but nonprofits were not

Social Media

- Closer correlation to color coded bars signifies consistency in CSR/DEI posts with CTAs
- Higher commitment to statements made with resources provided
- Nonprofits are far more diligent in communicating DEI efforts with clear CTAs
- Often "learn more" or dedicated seminars to amplify voices or educate their audiences
- For-profits had more dedicated CSR communications around sustainability, while nonprofits focused more on lobbying, transparency, and corporate partnerships for greater impact
- Social Media: Within Advocacy Months**
 - Higher bars signify most of corporation's overall DEI/CSR posts in the last year were made during advocacy months
 - Larger gaps between colors means a post was made, but without a CTA or actionable resource
 - Doesn't communicate commitment and reads as performative
 - Closer correlation to color coded bars signifies consistency in posting with CTAs
 - Higher commitment to statements made with resources provided

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both sectors need to be held to higher standards of CSR and DEI reporting.
 - Adopt credible reporting systems from experts to measure results and efforts against national and global standards rather than using their own favorable systems.
- Create more dialogues around CSR and DEI through social media and external communications without tying the efforts to the sale of a product.
 - Avoid sustainability certifications and diversify CTAs.
- Standardize job listings to follow a similar format that includes a DEI and CSR statement. Should not vary so drastically from application to application.
- While partnerships are a great way to maximize impact, there also needs to be stand alone efforts and goals made by the corporation, rather than writing off their responsibilities through involvement in a nonprofit or for-profit partnership.
- Integrate CSR and DEI into business/development models rather than relying on strategic communications to prove true commitment to these initiatives.

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LEARNINGS

- Broaden the sample pool to give more credibility to the results and averages.
- Focus on one area of communications more in depth to provide more specific recommendations.
- Compare corporations within similar fields to better understand the trends within industries.
- Defining CSR and DEI content could be very subjective, especially for social media.
- CTAs on social media didn't always equate to commitment
 - CTAs should be reflective of their own efforts.