



HOW CHANGE GETS GOING

What Nonprofit Organizations Can Do

1. **Build communications expertise on their staff and board.** For many reasons, the marketing, advertising and public relations fields suffer from a lack of diversity across the nation. This can create an expertise deficit in local organizations that serve communities of color. These organization should prioritize this skill set in order to help tell the full story of life in our community.
2. **Cultivate newsworthy positive stories.** Nonprofit organizations are working on some of the toughest issues facing our community, and all have success stories to share. Nonprofits should build the discipline of finding these stories in their daily work, and assessing their news value.
3. **Develop a communication plan.** Organizations should see external communication as central to their work, not a luxury. IN the same way they might develop a program plan or a financial plan, they should develop a strategic approach to telling their stories.
4. **Leverage owned communication channels.** While news media are a critically important news outlet, consumers are diversifying their sources of news, as well. From newsletters to Facebook feeds, nonprofits have a voice they control and should use to tell their stories. Journalists use social media to find news as well, making this channel especially valuable.
5. **Build relationships with local journalists.** Just as it is important for journalists to reach out to better understand their community, nonprofit organizations should get to know the people working in newsrooms across the community. By communicating their role in the community, nonprofits can become a resource for improved storytelling.
6. **Give feedback to local media when you see specific opportunities for improvement.** Local news organizations cannot improve if they are unaware of mistakes they make. Nonprofits should share feedback professionally, and with an eye toward improvement
7. **Continue the conversation.**



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What Media Can Do

1. **Step up efforts to build relationships in the community.** News professionals and community members alike suggested getting to know communities of color by spending time there and building relationships as a path to more well-rounded coverage of life here.
2. **Regularly invite & discuss community feedback.** While a time-consuming commitment, the process of asking, listening, discussing and acting is one of the most powerful ways for local media to change perceptions.
3. **Focus on news-organization-wide diversity.** Many organizations have made progress in diversifying their news staff, but news professionals told us there is still much progress to be made. And this diversity should be a priority in all aspects of news decision making to affect actions large and small. News organizations can step up recruiting of people of color at local colleges and universities and even local secondary schools to improve the diversity of the pipeline.
4. **Expand the definition of “news.”** Likely the most challenging of these recommendations is to reconsider what constitutes news. But community members are asking for this, and the media say they feel a responsibility for improving racial and ethnic relations in our community.
5. **Look for additional opportunities to share positive news.** Things like limited size of newsroom staff and length of broadcasts present some practical limitations to adding to coverage to meet these community expectations. But news organizations can consider accepting video provided by community organizations and posting additional community content on their websites and in their social media streams, where space is less finite. News organizations can undoubtedly innovate in this area.
6. **“Bad news” stories can also have solutions content or follow-up.** Not all news can be positive. But as Fred Rogers suggested, we can help people “look for the helpers” to see the full story, including reasons for hope and optimism. Community organizations offer valid sources for many of our community’s most challenging stories.
7. **Build a plan for internal change.** Unless organizations dedicate resources to understanding the issues and implications of this report, it is unlikely meaningful change will happen.
8. **Continue the conversation.**



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What Causewave Will Do

1. **Continue this conversation.** Causewave has developed a series of activities to further explore this issue and possible solutions. We welcome the participation of and feedback from local media, nonprofits and the community.
2. **Partner with interested nonprofits to communications plans.** The Rochester Area Community Foundation has committed funding to eliminate the cost barrier for nonprofits to develop communications plans that will help them tell their stories. Causewave will recruit volunteers and commit staff resources to the development of these plans, in collaboration with nonprofit organizations.
3. **Help media make connections with community resources & experts.** Causewave will partner with the RIT School of Communication on the development of a community sourcebook, to be made available to the media. This project will involve local journalism, public relations and communications students in creation of a new resource to help local news organizations build new relationships in the community.
4. **Check back in a year.** Causewave plans to reissue the perceptions study in late 2019 and again share the results with the community.



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What All of Us Can Do

1. **Continue this conversation.** Conversations about race can be difficult and uncomfortable for many of us. By talking with our friends, family and coworkers about representations of race in media, we deepen our understanding of the issue. By reaching out for civil dialog with those who have different perspectives and experiences, we can deepen our understanding of our community.
2. **Expand your consumption of local news.** Many participants in our polls reported a desire for more positive news about our community. By thoughtfully curating our intake of news content, we can satisfy this desire. By thoughtfully sharing such content, we can help others see more of what they truly want to see.
3. **Hold news outlets accountable for a broader definition of “news.”** Community members who want news content reflecting the true nature of life in our communities should share this desire with local news professionals. They can also be part of the solution by sharing those stories with the media as they find them.