



## MANAGEMENT AND POLICY PROCESS

KMA was hired by the Knight Ridder organization to lead multicultural training sessions with leaders and staff at several newspapers around the U.S. over a period of 2-3 years.



### Issue/Challenge

Low newspaper sales within ethnic communities, high turnover and lack of retention among ethnic staff and insufficient news coverage in diverse areas of Silicon Valley area community.



### Solution

Following a series of multicultural leadership training sessions led by KMA experts, a transformative goal was set to create a new gold standard and national model to reporting on a new America. The paper worked to ensure every group's voice and perspective was represented through changes to reporting practices and staff responsibilities. These groups included African Americans, East Asians, Hispanic/Latinos and South Asians. David Yarnold, managing editor, led his team through a number of steps to achieve this goal.

To begin, he incentivized journalists to take time to cultivate new diverse sources. In many cases, this meant going beyond the official figurehead for a story to deeper more authentic sources. The paper began to change. Photos, sources, points of view became increasingly diverse.

Next, he identified changes to the newsroom's infrastructure and processes in order to access the diversity of news judgment within the paper's staff. Real cultural diversity representation was required at every level and in every area of the newsroom, not just "visual" diversity. New processes were created to more effectively access the views of these diverse "other" journalists. For example, leadership supported staff in building new relationships, mentoring, running more inclusive meetings, and creating new approaches to career development, recruiting and retention. These efforts resulted in significant changes that truly served the diverse colleagues and the diverse readership of the San Jose Mercury News.



### Results

The changes increased employee retention, produced greater news coverage of diverse communities, increased sales and readership throughout the Silicon Valley and resulted in several industry awards acknowledging Yarnold's leadership and vision. Additionally, other Knight Ridder newspapers followed the best practices and leadership of the San Jose Mercury News resulting in systemic change throughout the organization that led to inclusive reader engagement, news reflective of communities and positive bottom line impact.



### Measure of Success

The Poynter Study said, "Newsroom attitudes regarding race and ethnicity seemed to be a strong predictor of diversity of content at the San Jose Mercury News..." NewsWatch, which looked at the diversity of images published following Sept. 11, said: "(Following Sept. 11)...the general population photographs in the San Jose Mercury News and Detroit Free Press came the closest to reflecting the overall ethnic diversity of their respective communities."

Columbia University's guide, Let's Do It Better, recognized them as a primary case study: "The Mercury News encompassed a systematic approach to diversity that reflects and serves the rapid demographic changes of its community."