



Burger King Corporation's Diversity Crisis

Challenge

One of America's best-known fast food restaurants was locked in a protracted legal struggle with one of its minority franchisees. Two factors were working against Avance's client: First, the franchisee's own influence and popularity in the community; and second, the public's long-standing perception that the company was not diversity sensitive. As a means of pressuring Burger King to settle the lawsuit in the franchisee's favor and to heighten community awareness that the corporation was not inclusive of diverse groups, a national boycott was threatened.

Solution

First and foremost, Burger King had to establish better communications with all of its publics. This included the African American community and some of its key leaders; the client's own franchisees; stockholders and customers. The Avance team and Burger King utilized the Avance Diversity CommunicationsSM model could be used to address these vital audiences. Avance conducted interviews with corporate staff, franchisees, community leaders, etc. This data help determine "the real issues" and communications barriers. Avance then created a strategic marketing communications plan. In doing so, Avance was able to help convey the company's vision of diversity and inclusion to all internal and external audiences. Further, Avance assisted the client by monitoring, and in many cases crafting communications vehicles such as policy statements, executive correspondences, press statements and newsletters. Extensive strategic communications, community and media relations plans were developed and implemented. Avance also identified key diversity and inclusion messages for executive management as well as accountability processes, and a process for continual evaluation. Burger King won its lawsuit. More importantly, Avance's diversity model helped Burger King to avert a national boycott and win in the court of public opinion.

