

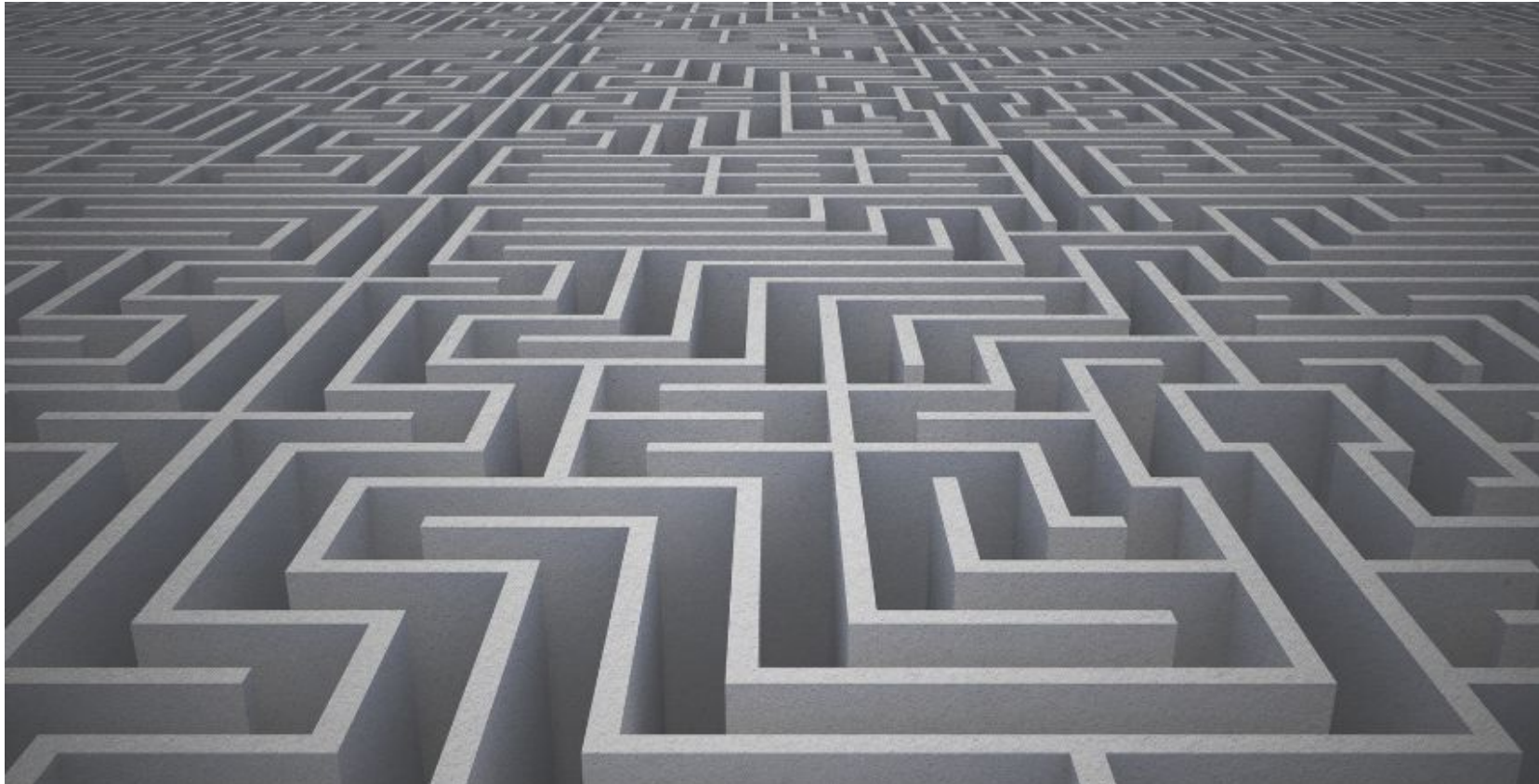
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API Inclusion Index Pittsburgh DEIB Cohort

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#APIInclusionIndex

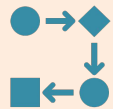
THE PROBLEM IS COMPLEX. IT REQUIRES COMPLEX INTERVENTIONS



PROBLEMS WITH DEIB APPROACHES IN JOURNALISM



Too many efforts take a one-size-fits-all approach, failing to recognize the complexity of issues impacting DEIB.



Too many efforts represent a one-time effort, as opposed to a sustained effort to transform newsrooms systematically.

API INCLUSION INDEX FOR BETTER NEWS COVERAGE

Diversity in newsrooms

Inclusivity (belonging) in newsrooms

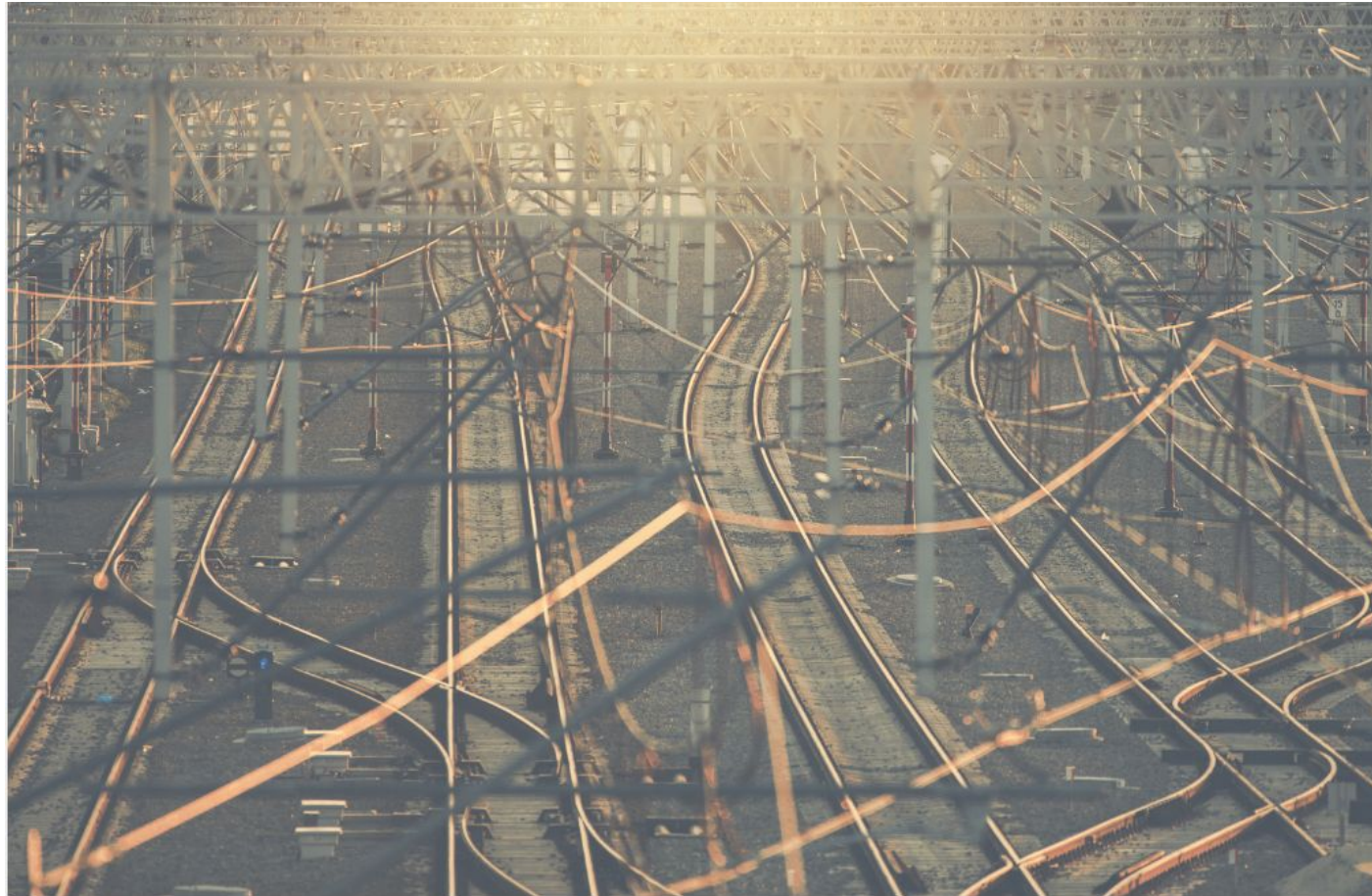
Representation of BIPOC/marginalized communities by newsrooms

Trust held by local communities of local newsrooms

Engagement efforts by local newsrooms within local communities

Assets within the community that can possibly help newsrooms improve news coverage of marginalized communities

INFRASTRUCTURE



SCALE – IS
YOUR EFFORT
(XXXXX)

1. Poor/(Invisible)

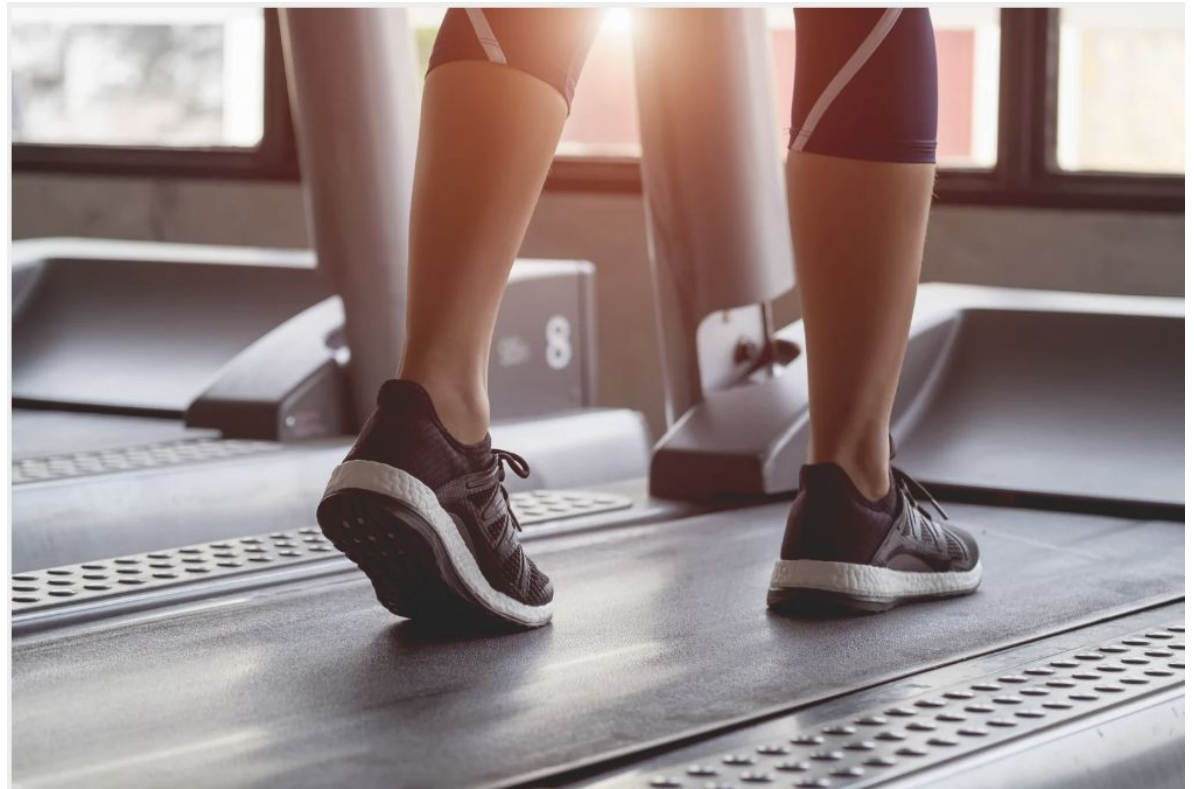
2. Below Average/(Token)

3. Average/(Tolerant)

4. Above Average/(Accepting)

5. Thriving/(Belonging)

EXAMPLES (TOKEN VERSUS THRIVING)



MUSCLE MEMORY

Because of the long-term commitment, each newsroom would develop muscle memory, in that doing this work would be ingrained as a routine practice for the newsroom.

This would help make this work sustainable, thus avoiding decline of the effort upon the departure of staff members.

DEIB COHORT: STEPS

- **Selection of newsrooms**
- **Research**
- **Cohort sessions**
- **Community listening**
- **Strategic plan development**
- **Public event/release of summary**

API INDEX PITTSBURGH: DATA

- Five newsroom surveys completed by the participating cohort members (2022)
- 37 interviews of newsroom workers from participating cohort members (2022)
- 11 interviews with community members (2020 and 2022)
- 30 additional interviews with newsroom workers conducted in 2018 and 2020
- 14 additional community interviews and/or focus groups conducted in 2018, 2020 and 2022
- 800+ articles
- Perception and Portrayals Studies ([2011](#) and [2020](#))
- PBMF Diversity Study ([2016](#))
- Tow Center/Columbia Journalism Review Study ([2019](#))
- Black Media Panel ([2020](#))
- Additional private/unpublished studies

Diversity: 2.5

DIVERSITY

- While there has been some movement, newsrooms indicated that they are collectively below parity ([36 percent](#)) with the diverse population of Pittsburgh, although they are collectively close to parity with Allegheny County ([23 percent](#)).
- Some newsrooms have innovative diversity initiatives to recruit local talent.
- Newsrooms have made an effort to recruit diverse interns.
- Newsrooms could use more formalized plans for recruitment.
- Retention is an issue, as journalists of color often leave local newsrooms after a few years.

DIVERSITY

- “If you continue to do things the same way, you're going to always get the same results. And I suspect that the newsrooms are going to look the same, because they're doing the same thing.” – Community resident on lack of newsroom diversity

Inclusion: 1.5

INCLUSION

- Inclusive of [some high-profile, public disputes](#), Pittsburgh newsrooms have had struggles related to [internal culture](#).
- Issues include wage concerns, burnout and a lack of mentorship opportunities.
- Newsrooms should consider developing more formal policies geared toward helping newsroom workers thrive within their current positions. This includes opportunities for specialized trainings and more mentorship opportunities.

INCLUSION

- “I think people need to be in an environment where they feel comfortable expressing who they are without having to worry about any type of consequences,” – Former Pittsburgh reporter, [as cited in CJR](#)

Representation: 2.0

REPRESENTATION

- Pittsburgh newsrooms have long struggled with fair and equal representation of African Americans, as noted by two separate studies conducted and released by the Heinz Endowments in [2011](#) and [2020](#).
- Local residents of color expressed concerns that they do not feel their communities are accurately and adequately represented on a regular basis by local media.
- Some newsrooms, however, have made an effort to do more to highlight communities of color via special sections. We feel these efforts should extend beyond specialized coverage, although this is certainly a start.

REPRESENTATION

- “I also don't think that they do a great job at covering any stories besides negative stories. Black issues are really just oftentimes covering trauma, and covering horrible incidences of things that have happened. And there's just a ton of examples.” – Black resident of McKeesport

Engagement: 1.5

ENGAGEMENT

- Pittsburgh newsrooms, in most cases, lack formal community engagement teams utilized by many newsrooms across the nation.
- Engagement also does not take place routinely outside of the story gathering process.
- Local residents expressed a desire to have more direct engagement with local media on a routine basis.

ENGAGEMENT

- “There's a lot of good that doesn't get covered. Because again, if you're not engaging with the community, then you don't know what's happening in the community, except at that moment where you go to cover that story. And if you're more engaged, then you're aware of other things that are happening that, that, that are good stories.” – Pittsburgh resident on engagement

Trust 1.0

TRUST

- Residents of color expressed feelings of deep distrust for local media across the board.
- This has been intensified by a significant number of public occurrences over the past eight years.
- This disdain is generalized. This means distrust is broadly applied to newsrooms regardless of extent of perceived harm to the community.

TRUST



- “You probably are familiar with [Wendy Bell](#), but a lot of the controversy around some of the things that she said, in regards to Black residents, Black Lives Matter and things like that are very offensive and problematic and racist at the end of the day, and they took a very long time to get rid of her on the radio. And so that definitely was a deterrent for me.” – Pittsburgh resident on trust level for local media

Assets: 1.0

ASSETS

- Asset mapping is a more complex tool used to understand communities. It is not often deployed by newsrooms. But due to the lack of source tracking and engagement, there is little evidence that precursory work toward asset mapping is in place.

ASSETS

- “I want (Pittsburgh media) to know that we're human, and that the stories they tell should be strengths-based, and asset-based and . . . historically informed about the neighborhood,” – local Black resident to members of Pittsburgh media, November 2022

Infrastructure: 1.5

LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

Newsrooms across the board lack systems in place to do DEIB work.

- Recruitment (hiring plans, connections with organizations/universities)
- Inclusivity (trainings, mentorship, newsroom conversations)
- Representation (content audits, source auditing, Fault Lines training)
- Engagement/trust (engagement teams, accountability/listening sessions, surveys, community advisory groups, plans related to online feedback)
- Assets (asset maps, community information needs assessments)

LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

- “We deserve resources that we don't have today and we deserve different coverage. I also would like the media to know that they hold power to harm us individually ... (when) they cast a negative connotation on our identities, that can harm us at the end of the day,” local Black resident to members of Pittsburgh media, November 2022.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Build up and support local talent pipelines, and do so on a coordinated basis.
2. Strengthen your community engagement efforts, including collaborating with other newsrooms when feasible.
3. Make a greater effort to ensure the staff members within your newsrooms have the chance to thrive.
4. Build infrastructure that allows you to assess your own news gathering practices, notably as they pertain to sourcing and content. And take a look at your style guides, too!
5. Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate!



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