

“Male, Pale and Stale.”

That’s how an early 2019 Glassdoor review describes MSL UK. **Ouch.** And a strange place to start a D&I Champion narrative.

Under new leadership since September 2019, **MSL is now a proud home to fresh, diverse talent**, with 25% of our people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. We’ll keep striving for more and at least the 41% London benchmark.

BECOMING A HOME TO FRESH AND DIVERSE TALENT

2020 was a seminal year for Diversity & Inclusion in our agency. We knew we needed a new strategy and a series of initiatives to support and expand opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Our **EMBRACE-CHANGE** strategy was born and we have achieved a lot of progress, with 66% of hires in 2020 coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

- We’ve signed BITC’s Race at Work Charter
- We refreshed our recruitment processes including introducing

With a new CEO and MD on board, we focused on creating an entirely new culture where everyone feels and knows their voice matters, they are heard and their contribution is acknowledged, recognised and rewarded. It’s about helping everyone understand how they individually benefit from inclusive environment and what role they can play in building a great place to work.

blind CVS, had diverse shortlists for every single role we recruited and invested in bespoke D&I training for all our people

- We created new dedicated D&I Champion to work with Publicis Groupe UK
- Of course, our intern programmes are paid. We provide all interns with an entry-level salary and full benefits. This demonstrates that we value their contribution and it’s meant that 90% of our interns have converted to full-time roles.



FAST FORWARD //

Under the Embrace Change-Strategy, we launched a new initiative called FAST FWD //.

FAST FWD // is our early careers platform to accelerate fresh and diverse talent into the industry.

It all started in 2020, where we started to carefully research and select

partners to help us become the new home to fresh and diverse talent. We committed to finding partners who shared our values and would help us reach diverse talent-pools and ultimately expand opportunities for as many individuals as possible. Each partnership is unique, but with the same commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

SUPA NETWORK (OUTREACH INITIATIVE)

Supa Network are a brilliant social enterprise that are helping us find and grow creative talent from diverse and low-income backgrounds. This year, 11 Supa Network members will join our first cohort on 1 July 2021. This is a six-month development programme aimed at 18-27 years old from low-income households. Each participant receives a £1,000 grant, a ‘Creative Coach’ (mentor), access to live client projects and teams, a minimum of 2 training sessions per month, and access to permanent and freelance gigs with MSL and the wider Publicis Groupe network.

Each Supa Talent will graduate with a bolstered portfolio to help with their career, a strong network of contacts, and the potential to become a full-time MSLer. For those who apply but don’t make the cohort, they’ll still gain access to all MSL and Publicis Groupe opportunities. MSL has invested over £30,000 this year alone (excluding time). We worked closely with Supa Network to introduce MEANS testing to boost our outreach and strengthen support for low-income and people from Diverse ethnic backgrounds groups.

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY (EDUCATION INITIATIVE)

We partnered with Middlesex University to **diversify our Graduate networks and applications**. In terms of the composition of their UK undergraduate intake, 73.8% come from London and 66% are from black and minority ethnic groups and 98.3% come from state schools or colleges (source: HEIDI+).

MSL has partnered with Middlesex's Department of Media, Advertising & Branding to facilitate talks and training as part of their curriculum, whilst also offering roles and internships to their existing and alumni students.

MULTIVERSE (APPRENTICESHIPS/EARLY CAREERS)

We've also partnered with Multiverse, to find and hire Apprentices and grow them into the PR industry, as an alternative to university and corporate training. Of the Apprentices that Multiverse place,

- 53% are from ethnic minority backgrounds
- 52% are women
- 36% meet our indicators of socio-economic disadvantage

When asked about the partnership, Euan Blair, Founder and CEO of Multiverse, said:

“MSL and Multiverse are both aligned on a mission to build a route to the boardroom for a diverse group of future leaders”.

CREATING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT AT MSL

We've also developed two key initiatives at a Publicis Groupe level (Chris McCafferty, MSL CEO, co-leads D&I for the UK Publicis Groupe), introducing the **Publicis Groupe UK Behaviour Charter**, and our new **Raising Concerns at Work** process. Simply put, these two initiatives aim to firstly outline the inclusive, everyday behaviours we expect of everyone in the Publicis Groupe UK, and secondly, simplify the way we can all raise concerns if we need to.

We also have several Business Resource Groups that represent the agendas of various protected characteristics. The groups include:

- **‘Egalite’** – to support the Publicis Groupe LGBTI community
- **‘VivaWomen’** – to support gender equality and women on their career paths, especially to stem the loss of senior female talent
- **‘Enable’** – supporting those with disability

- **‘Headline’** – supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees, and
- **‘Embrace’** – supporting people from diverse ethnic backgrounds (black, Asian, minority ethnic people) and their allies

This year, we're proud to have **enhanced our maternity leave** to 26 weeks full pay, up from 16 weeks, and a full-pay phased return to work scheme. We've also launched a **menopause policy and miscarriage policy** – this is a really important step forward in our mission to deal with all kinds of things that are so rarely openly talked about, discussed, and supported in the workplace.

In June 2021, our **new referral scheme**, Publicis+1, was launched. We're incentivising all our staff by offering an extra £1,000 if the person comes from outside the industry or traditional pathways.



But wait. We don't just apply our D&I approach to ourselves, we also use it in our client work

We tackled a major Belief gap for one of the world's biggest tech companies. We've also worked extensively with one of the world's biggest entertainment companies, helping it launch Hollywood's first Diversity & Inclusion Report.

At all points our approach is to ensure that what we're creating speaks inclusively to all the audiences. We know that if under-represented audiences can see themselves in this work, they can see a new future for themselves.