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**PR INDUSTRY ISSUES REPORT AND ACTION PLAN FROM DIVERSITY
SUMMIT**

**Leadership Group Develops Models for Action and Strategies
For Diversifying Industry**

New York, NY, July 6, 2005 – The leadership of the public relations profession is stepping up its efforts to improve diversity within the industry, especially its senior management ranks. This was revealed today by the issuance of a groundbreaking report entitled “Focus on Diversity: Lowering the Barriers; Raising the Bar,” by the Public Relations Coalition, an alliance of 23 major organizations representing all of the communications disciplines, comprising more than 50,000 members.

In addition to reinforcing their commitment, the Coalition members also pledged to conduct an annual survey of Corporate Communications officers and public relations agency CEOs to track progress on this topic. The survey process is currently underway.

The content of the report is based on a summit of leaders of the member organizations last January, coupled with a recent compilation of resources that members and others could use to develop and grow their diversity effort.

“The PR Coalition is proud of the fact that it was able to bring together, for the first time, the industry’s top leaders to collaboratively address the vital issue of diversity,” said James E. Murphy, Global Managing Director of Marketing and Communications for Accenture and chairman of the Coalition and the summit meeting. “This report creates a model for action that can have a significant impact on our profession.”

There were three areas that were identified as key elements for improving ethnic and gender diversity in any organization: recruiting, mentoring and advocacy. While there were several specific recommendations for each area, it was recognized that they are interrelated and part of a process that can be adapted to meet the organization’s specific needs

- **Recruiting:** the first step in the process, it’s critical to make the recruiting of a more diverse workforce a top down commitment and an integrated effort supported by every part of the organization;
- **Mentoring:** mentoring programs need support from top management who must lead by example;

- **Advocacy:** The communication of the importance of diversity must begin with a business strategy that links to diversity and then helps facilitate the dialogue that will build understanding and strengthen workplace relationships.

As part of the framework for the Summit, an excerpt from the Coalition’s working definition of diversity was presented by Meta J. Mereday, diversity communications specialist who chaired the Focus on Diversity Summit and is Vice President, Programs of the National Black Public Relations Society. It reads:

“Diversity is not about exclusion, but about inclusion in all respects. It is not about taking away anyone’s position of power, but about building on everyone’s strengths for the future. For the purposes of the Summit, the primary diversity issues are the importance of building alliances and generating outreach to increase the number of women and people of color within the upper ranks of the public relations industry.”

The report also includes a comprehensive resource guide, which features suggested reading as well as an overview of various programs, scholarships and incentives that are available to attract a more diverse pool of communications professionals. The Focus on Diversity Summit planning team included: Rachel Honig, G.S. Schwartz & Co. representing Women Executives in Public Relations; Bill Doescher, The Doescher Group, representing the PRSA Foundation; Michael Goodman, Corporate Communication Institute; Donna Renella, Weber Shandwick, representing the Council for PR Firms and Paul Basista, Arthur W. Page Society.

The PR Coalition has been active since early 1999; it hosted its first summit in January 2002, producing a white paper titled: “Restoring Trust in Business: Models for Action.”

Coalition member organizations include:

Arthur W. Page Society

Asian American Advertising and Public Relations Alliance

Association of Business Communication

The Conference Board Council on Communications Strategy

Corporate Communication Institute at Fairleigh Dickinson University

Council of Communication Management

Council of Public Relations Firms

Foundation of WEPR

Global Public Affairs Institute

Hispanic Public Relations Association

Institute for Public Relations

International Association of Business Communicators

International Public Relations Association

The Lagrant Foundation

National Black Public Relations Society

National Investor Relations Institute
National School Public Relations Association
Public Affairs Council
Public Relations Society of America
PRSA Counselors Academy
PRSA Foundation
San Francisco Academy
Women Executives in Public Relations

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