

PRWeek

Working toward diversity: APCO Worldwide

Founded by a woman, Margery Kraus, APCO Worldwide has always been an advocate of diversity and inclusion, says Nelson Fernandez, MD for the firm's New York office (*pictured*).

In May 2009, the firm soft-launched a diversity and inclusion program, including making Fernandez the chief diversity and inclusion officer.

"I think this is really going to set a very different kind of model for our industry," he explains, "one that is really focused on metrics and on driving diversity and inclusion initiatives going forward."

The program has four committees – a community affairs task force, a communications task force, a strategy and metrics committee, and a recruitment and education committee. It



will work to get involved in community programs, as well as ramp up recruitment and retention initiatives.

The program will officially launch in 2010, with Fernandez making sure everyone in the agency understands the program and its goals. He will work alongside his committee chairs and co-chairs: Cindy Abraham, Laurie Labuda, Cassandra Pye, Megan Carpenter, Linda Distlerath, Elena Garcia, and Jessica Lee.

"For APCO, and probably for the industry as a whole, there is no one I can think of who doesn't believe that hiring diverse talent makes sense for business," Fernandez says. "The question is how we get from being intellectually committed to the issue to being really operationally invested in the issue."

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