

Diversity is all around, everywhere, every day. It's more than black and white or right and wrong. Journalists use ethical principles to make decisions and frame information. Media professionals have an ethical responsibility to tell their stories in full circle whenever possible.

Let's look at international war correspondents as an example of how two divergent perspectives can be better than one.

One journalist may be qualified and trained for war coverage and how to report it, but another journalist may have a background in military leadership and is also qualified. The two may have a different view of wartime events. A qualified, trained journalist who has not been a military officer may be better able to offer stories from an emotional level, including stories about human suffering. The former military official may better understand military verbiage and the culture of certain foreign countries.

Both can be effective international war correspondents, and neither is right or wrong. Due to their different life experiences, they can give U.S. audiences some diverse viewpoints about how a war affects people in foreign countries.

Diversity and ethics sometimes go hand in hand.

To tell an accurate, engaging story, a good journalist or PR professional must understand the entire setting of the story. You can't just include part of the information; you must cover all aspects by setting complete scenes and getting input from the agencies and people who are involved.

If you are an AD/PR professional, you represent a client. However, you may not like a client's viewpoint or the item that is being promoted. In some instances, you may be forced to make a choice. Do you continue to work for the client or not? If you choose not to work for the client, you may be without a job, but you keep your ethical values.

Ethical stories and advertisements should be framed so that they do not reflect stereotypes or biases. That often means incorporating multiple sources, viewpoints and people to reflect the diversity of society.

Robert Maynard, philosopher of the "fault lines" framework, brought up five consistent factors that shape lives and social tensions in America: race, class, gender, generation and geography. Media professionals who consider each of these as they cover complex stories can understand issues and events more clearly, correct for missing pieces in interpretations, and increase the accuracy of their work.

In addition to Maynard's framework, diversity can also involve age, political perspective, religion or sexual orientation.

[Poynter](#) says that there are five questions journalists should ask to diversify their sources.

Those five questions are:

- Are we including the voices of the people most affected by what's happening?
- How are we defining "experts" in this story?
- Are we engaging with a diverse range of sources, even when the story isn't explicitly about marginalized groups?
- Are we making assumptions about our readers?
- How are we explaining our process to sources?

Ad/PR professionals can easily reframe those questions to reflect on the diversity of their promotional work.

As the [Society of Professional Journalists](#) says, mirroring the community through journalism is different than highlighting ethnic food, traditions or community gatherings in the news; it goes further than incorporating civil rights, immigration, and race issues in ongoing coverage.

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