



“Why Not an N Double-A L?”

Why do firms merge? Mainly because they recognize that benefits may be gained through mergers. For example, firms may find that their interests are well aligned; they see prospects for cutting costs; and they seek the benefits derived from exploiting economies of scale.

Economists will tell you, on the other hand, that there are also drawbacks to forming large bureaucracies—namely X-inefficiency, which results when bureaucratic processes become unwieldy. Nevertheless, firms that merge are finding it increasingly possible to reduce X-inefficiency and to intensify efficiency gains from mergers.

Black organizations dot the American landscape. Whether they are Black religious denominations or Black organizations that are engaged in fighting for causes, you find them everywhere you turn. It stands to reason, then, that some of these organizations might benefit from merging.

Nearly seven years ago, we visited this topic; specifically suggesting that Black religious denominations might benefit from merging. No one appears to have received the memo. So we’re back at it again. This time, however, the focus is on the two most important non-religious Black American organizations: The NAACP and the Urban League.

Both of these organizations have relatively new, young leadership. It may be an opportune moment to suggest that these two great organizations explore the benefits of a merger.

How could these organizations benefit? In the ways mentioned above. Although they have distinct founding charters, over the years, they have both come to focus on the issues of the day. For example, the big issue in the Black America today is JOBS. Both the NAACP and the Urban League are working (together) on this issue. Moreover, the two organizations have increasingly aligned themselves on key issues and have worked together to achieve common objectives. Given this increasing phenomenon, it is logical that the two organizations could merge on ideological grounds.

As one unit, the two organizations could cut costs considerably by combining facilities. They could operationalize more effective common membership and fundraising programs. Given a larger combined membership, they would have more clout when they petitioned public or private sector agencies or organizations. In addition, their

unified clenched fist would have more power than their current two separated fingers when they seek to mobilize Black Americans to achieve an objective.

Both organizations have rich and treasured histories and traditions. Every Black American is not a member of either organization, but almost all, if not all, Black Americans of a reasonable age know about the Urban League and the NAACP. But we should not allow history and tradition to cloud our best judgment. We should not be afraid to change and to reap the benefits of that change.

Think about it. How proud would Black Americans be to know that there were not two, three, or four organizations trying to represent their interests, but just one, solid, and unified organization that represented their interests with a combined force of power.

Firms the world over are recognizing the benefits of mergers. Why should Black Americans fail to recognize these benefits and reap them?

We'll say it again: "You can't keep doing the same old thing and expect to achieve a different outcome. To gain new benefits, rise to a higher level, and to improve Black America's well-being, we must adopt different strategies." An NAACP and Urban League merger would be good for Black America, and the idea should be entertained.

To help this change along, we'll suggest a name for the new organization: The National African American League (N Double-A L).

If that name is unacceptable, then divine another. But for the sake of Black America, merge the two organizations. It is one component of a strategy that Black America needs to meet 21st century challenges.

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