

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

FOR MARKETERS

VOLUME 1

JUNE 2020

"I CAN'T BREATHE"

–George Floyd

INTRODUCTION

*“But all our phrasing—race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy—serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. **You must never look away from this.** You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body.”*

—**Ta-Nehisi Coates**, Author and Journalist

This is an intervention into the persistence of ideas, and our power as marketers to create, mold, and change them. And what are Whiteness and Blackness, but ideas?—Fixed points on either end of a spectrum that dictate who has power, and who is without it. As humans first, and marketers second, we know that ideas are powerful. They can change someone's mind and even the course of history. In some instances, they can inflict very real harm—even end a life.

The world watched on June 1, 2020 as an officer of the State, sworn to protect and serve, murdered, in cold blood, a person that he promised to keep safe. This officer was so easily able to murder George Floyd because he knew that he could do so with total impunity. His power over life and death in that woefully banal moment was absolute. The officer, in that moment, knee on neck, taunting gaze, was the embodiment of a persistent and insidious idea: Some lives matter more than others. All people are equal, but some are more equal. Those that are most able to stand as equal to the law can take someone's life...
and *it doesn't matter.*

You may be a firm ally, you may be new to BLM, you may be working closely with brands on developing their diversity strategy. Whatever your starting point today, this document is an opportunity to reflect. **Black lives matter...**

Reflect for a moment on the word 'matter'...

Matters. What's more rudimentary or base than matter?

To think that the statement “Black Lives Matter” stirs controversy is a symptom of a broader problem.

The need to state that **Black Lives Matter** is born of repeated instances of Black lives being ended altogether, for no reason at all, and without consequence.

Black lives more than matter. They have significance. They have meaning. They have purpose.

Now think for a moment on the things that matter to you.

How would you respond if those matters were taken from you?

What lengths would you go to hold onto and protect them?

What would you not do?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?*

*This document poses many rhetorical questions. It even features a workbook with all of them. They are included with the hope that in seeking to answer a few difficult questions we might find a path forward.

ALLYSHIP STARTS AT HOME

If corporations are people, then a **brand is the thinking, feeling, sensing part of the corporate body**. We, advertisers and marketers, are the guardians of this sacred trust.

OUR WORLD IS CHANGING FASTER THAN WE ARE

85%

of Americans expect companies to help address racial inequality¹

In the 1970s, 5% of people in Advertising were Black or Latino. **Fast forward 40 years, and only 6% of workers are Black.**² **Nothing has changed.** Our industry still ranks among the most segregated.

At the same time, our world has changed without us. And in the course of this year, people 18 and under in the US will be a majority-minority generation.³ No single race will comprise more than 50% of the population. Similar shifts are taking place in the UK. Consumers have changed too, **83% of consumers give preference to brands with high diversity scores.**⁴

WE CAN, AND NEED, TO DO BETTER

47%

of survey respondents could not name three BLM allies

When we asked survey respondents to think of three companies that were good allies for Black Lives Matter, only half could name three companies. **One in ten respondents (11%) said that they couldn't think of a single BLM ally or left the question completely blank.**

When we asked people to name the company that showed the strongest BLM allyship, respondents overwhelmingly chose Nike. **40% said Nike was their top choice**, with a further 17% choosing Ben and Jerry's. There are 35M companies in the US and UK. Are two companies really to do all of the heavy lifting? When asked what made a strong ally, respondents said that allyship needs to be woven into a company's DNA.

WE CAN'T DO BETTER UNTIL WE CHANGE

64%

of Black men report being on guard at work because of anticipated bias⁴

While we know that diversity is important, the advertising industry still lags behind. We struggle to retain diverse talent, and those within our organizations struggle comparatively. Black employees reported higher instances of anticipated bias. **Almost half (47%) of Black workers surveyed didn't think that their workplace was safe for Black people**, compared with a mere **4% of white people**.

Despite our best intentions we struggle, but still we must persist. Racial equality is among the most pressing issues of our time, and we must treat it with the same urgency that we do everything else that's important to us. Through client challenges, day in and day out, we must persist.

"Sometimes we are blessed with being able to choose the time, and the arena, and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle where we are standing."

—**Audre Lorde**, Writer and Activist

Sources:¹[Engage for Good](#), 2020, ²[ANA Diversity in Advertising Report](#), 2018, ³[The Brookings Institute](#), 2018, ⁴[Deloitte](#), 2019, ⁵[Catalyst.org](#), [Emotional Tax Report](#), 2019



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

A diverse network of one hundred experts and leaders in Advertising from the US and UK came together to provide their opinions on what Black Lives Matter allyship should look like for marketers. They weighed in on who was doing the best job, and what brands need to do to keep up with the rapidly shifting current of our social landscape. They also answered two pointy questions about the state of Black lives in Advertising:

- Are there Black people in decision-making positions where you work?
- Are the Black people in your place of work safe?

These research tracks may seem disparate, but they are intimately linked. Until we become allies to the people working beside us and within the ranks of our organizations, we will struggle to advise our clients as well as the broader creative industry on how best to engage with the increasingly diverse populations that they - and we - serve.

ALLYSHIP BEGINS AT HOME.

WHO WEIGHED IN ...

**This research is exploratory and directional in nature, sample sizes are not representative.*

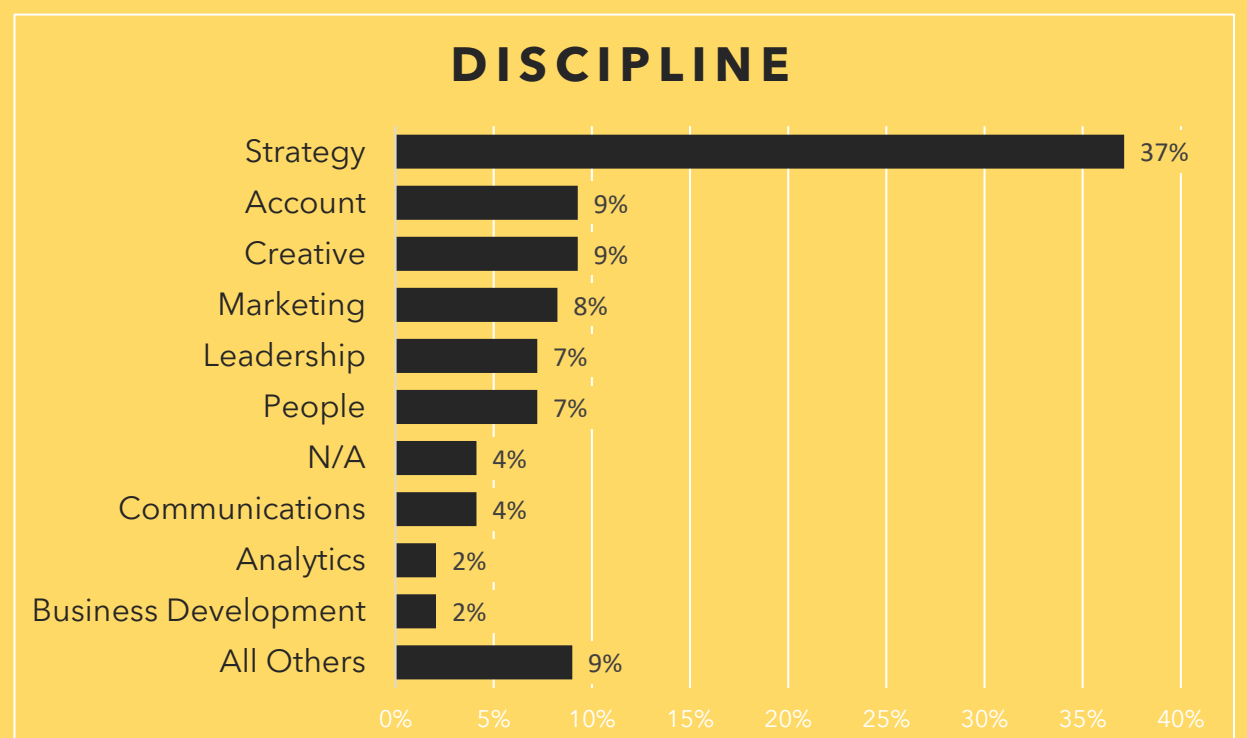
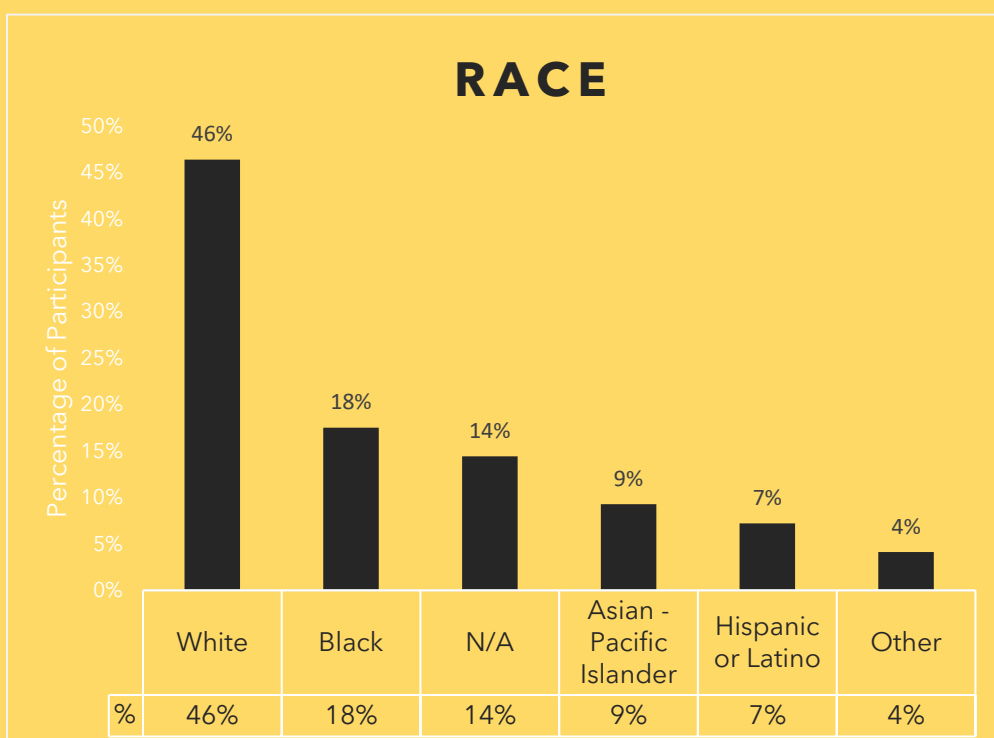
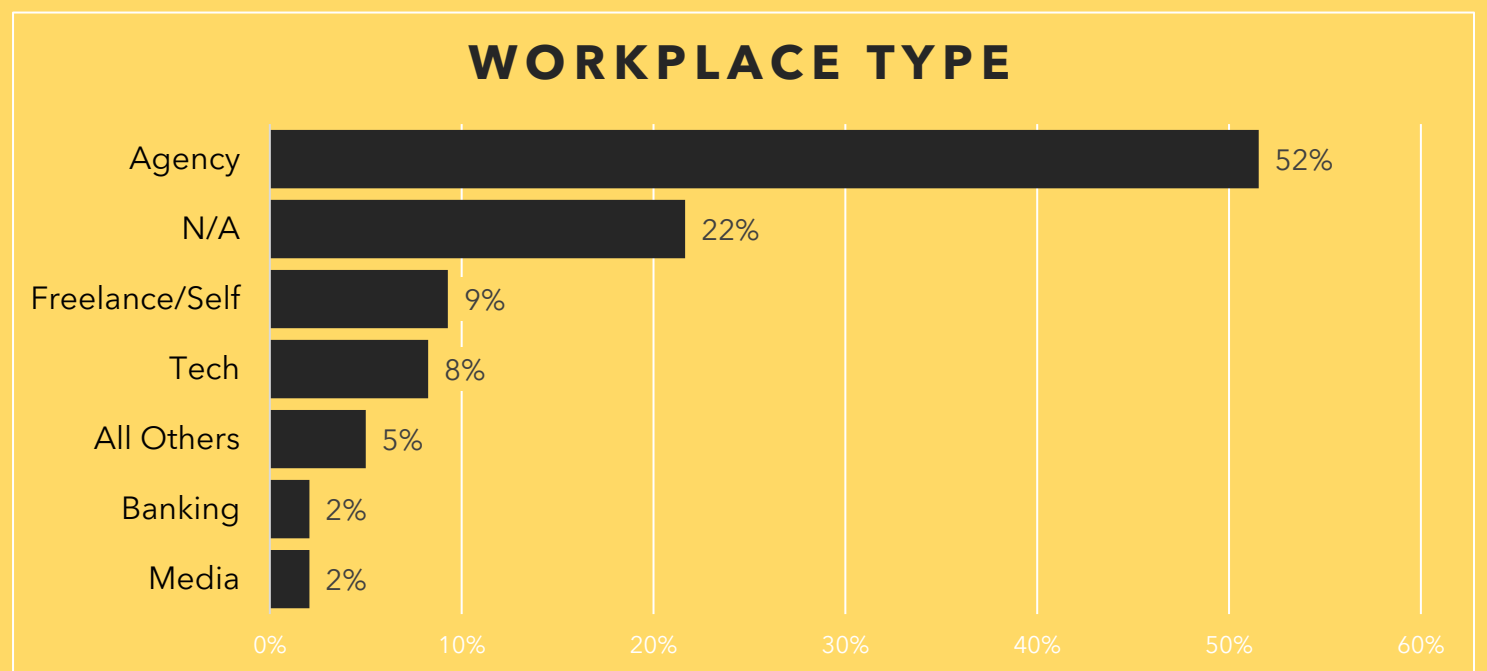
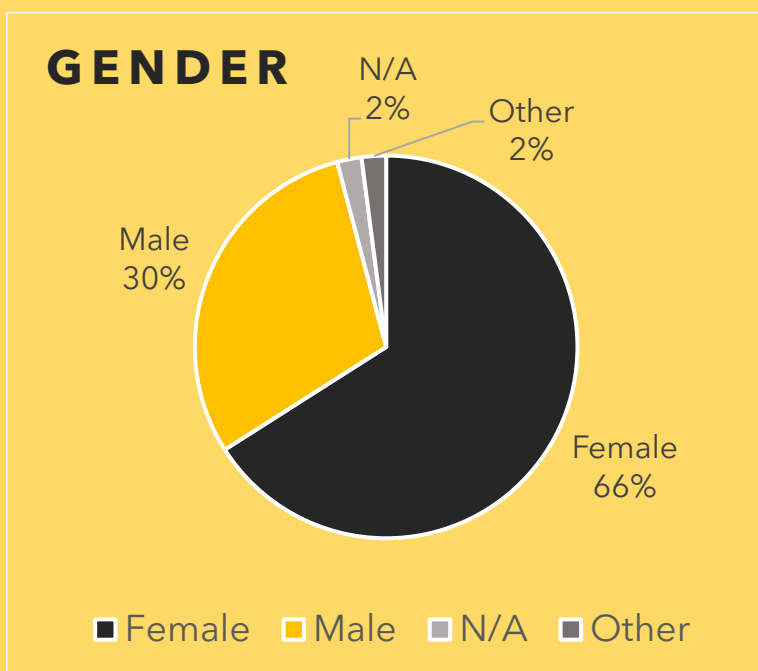


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Figures are from survey responses, unless otherwise indicated.



LEADING FOR CHANGE

A NOTE ON LEADERSHIP

*"It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. **You take the front line when there is danger.** Then people will appreciate your leadership."*

–**Nelson Mandela**, World Leader

Leadership during times of unrest is difficult. If today you find yourself in a leadership position or trying to spearhead a Black Lives Matter initiative internally, you'll recognize that the path is rife with pitfalls. **Nevertheless, you must persist.**

The Black people in your organization are having a harder time on the job (and in life) than their White counterparts. The effects of systemic racism are prevalent in every aspect of our organizations: bias in hiring, pay inequity, lack of trusted peers and advisors to go to with challenges, few Black leaders that represent aspiration for future success. If you don't have access to your company's latest hiring, retention, and satisfaction numbers or lack the data to dispel these assertions about disparity, there's a simple test you can perform:

Would you want to be a Black person in the organization that you lead?

If you answered 'yes', well done! You're doing better than a lot of your peers. Now test two:

Do you think you would be where you are today if you were Black?

If you are wondering where to start in unravelling your answer, ask yourself 'why?' This answer is your starting place.

Unravelling systemic racism doesn't rest solely on your shoulders, **but it has to start with you.**

Every single one of us has a role to play. For leaders that means setting the example that those around us will follow. It will take courage and persistence, but you can do it. You made it this far, didn't you?

TAKE A DEEP BREATH: There are things you can do today

Give your attention to the challenge. Pull out those numbers we mentioned, and ask 'why'.

Give your energy and time. Set your highest intention for change.

Give others room to join you on the journey. Give them space to lead, too.

It's that simple: **Start and don't stop until your answers to those questions change.**



"It will be hard for those of us in a position of privilege as a function of our professional and personal status to relinquish that status. But it is necessary."

–**Seth**, Strategist, BLM Ally



THE CHANGING TIDE

OUR WORLD IS CHANGING

CONSUMERS EXPECT A LOT FROM US

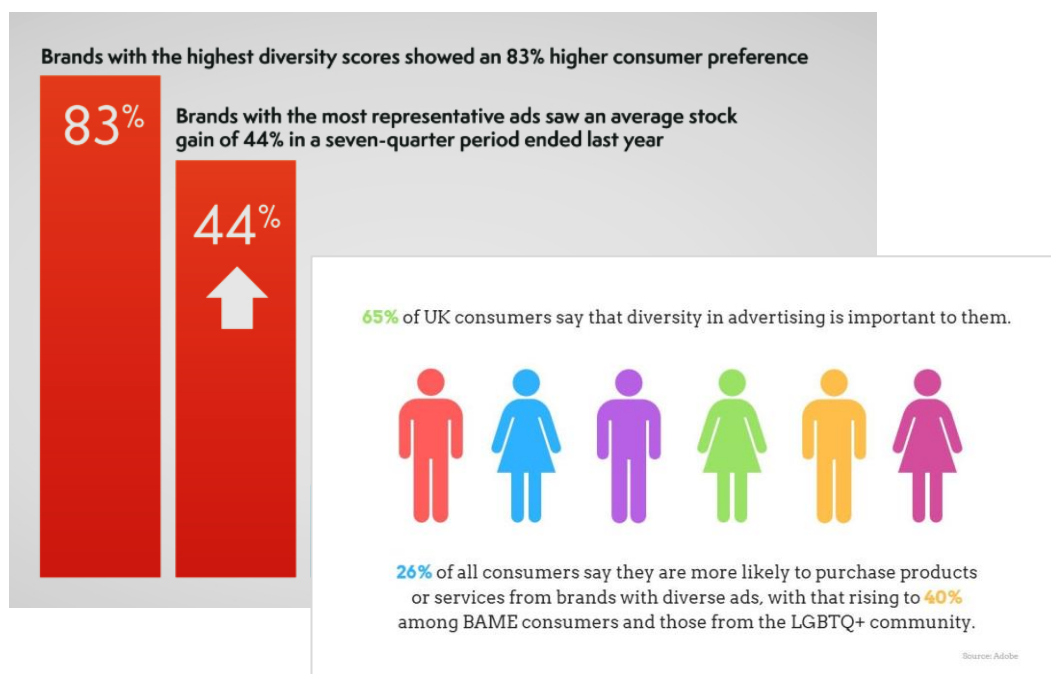
DO WE AS MARKETERS EXPECT AS MUCH OF OURSELVES?

In 2014, the Supreme Court of the United States cemented corporate personhood with their landmark decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* They upheld that corporations are entitled to many of the same protections that human beings enjoy.

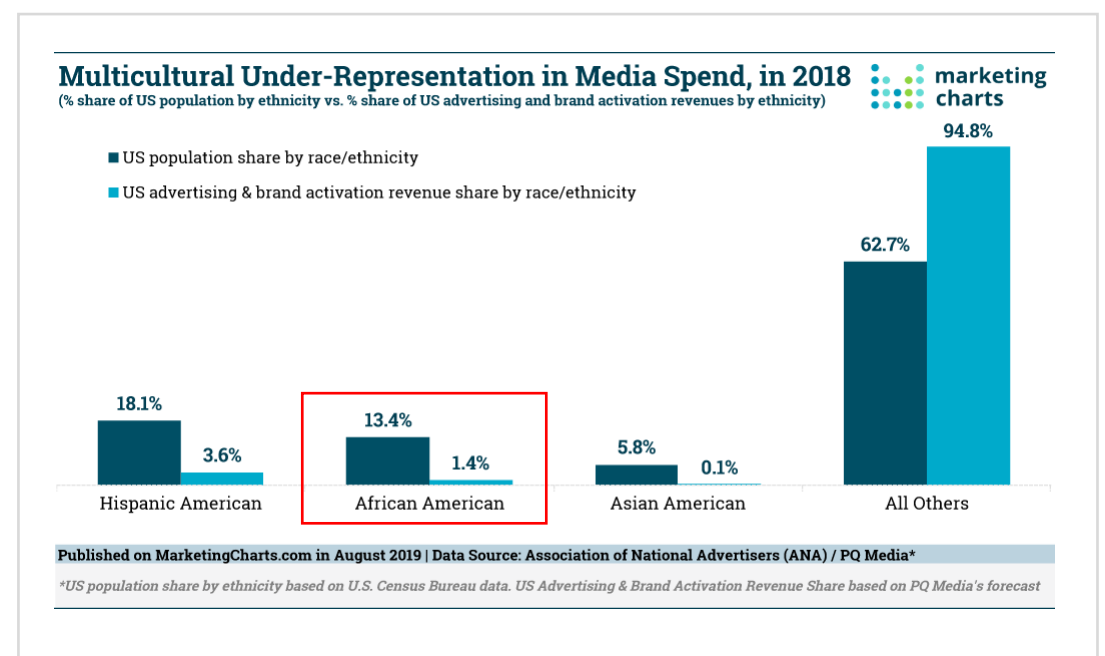
If corporations are people, then a **brand is the thinking, feeling, sensing part of the corporate body**. We, advertisers and marketers, are the guardians of this sacred trust.



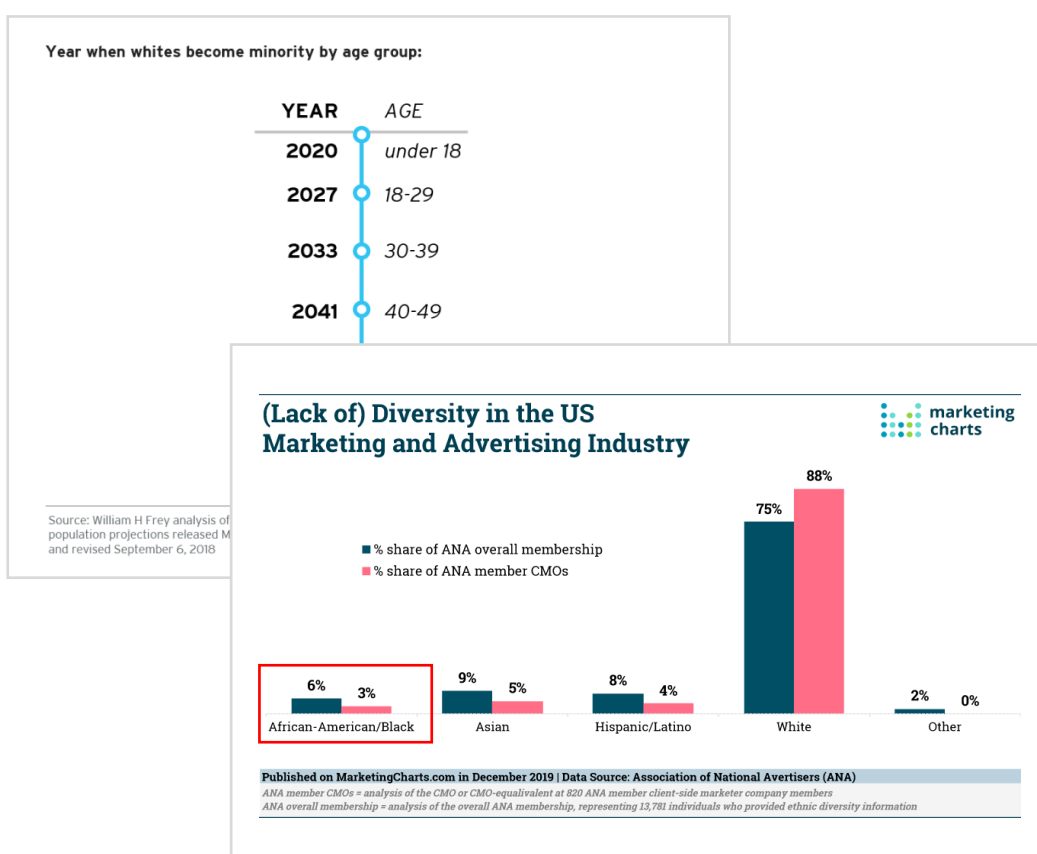
CONSUMERS PREFER DIVERSITY...



BUT ADLAND DOES NOT INVEST



CAN WE SERVE A MAJORITY-MINORITY WORLD?



OUR AUDIENCES ARE CHANGING FASTER THAN WE ARE...

In 1978, only 5% of the advertising workforce was Black². In 2018, forty years later, the ANA reported that Blacks only made up 6% of staff for their member organizations (600+).

In 40 years, nothing changed...

At the same time, projections indicate that for people under the age of 18, minorities will outnumber Whites in 2020 in the US. Similar shifts are occurring in the UK. **How can we reasonably expect to serve diverse populations when they're not represented within our industry?**

Sources: ¹Engage for Good, 2020, ²ANA Diversity in Advertising Report, 2018, The Brookings Institute, 2018, CMO.Adobe.com, 2019, Deloitte, 2019



JUST DO BETTER

IS NIKE THE ONLY BLM ALLY?

WE ASKED ONE HUNDRED EXPERT MARKETERS ...

which companies are good allies to the Black Lives Matter movement, and only half could think of three companies excelling at allyship.

From amongst the 35M companies in the US and UK, we could barely think of three.

We can do better than this as an industry.

Is Nike the only brand with a relationship with Black People?

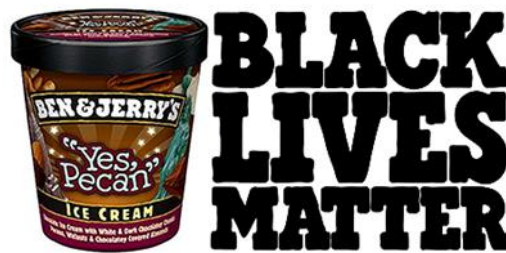
47%

of survey respondents could not name three companies that are good BLM allies.

WHEN ASKED WHO IS THE BEST BLM ALLY...

- Almost 60% of respondents chose one of two companies:
 - Almost 40% of respondents chose Nike
 - 17% chose Ben & Jerry's

For once,
Don't Do It.



PARTICIPANTS STRUGGLED TO NAME THREE

- Only 53% of participants could think of three companies doing well in the space
- More than 1 in 4 (28%) could only think of one company
- 'None' and 'N/A' were the third and fourth most common entries



"[I chose] Ben and Jerry's because this isn't the first time they have spoken out about injustice. They have an ice cream named after this. It seems like it's always been part of their make-up and not just a brand hopping on the bandwagon."

—PEDRO, MARKETER

TOP BLM ALLIES

COMPANY	%
Nike	38%
Ben & Jerry's	17%
Glossier	6%
None	6%
N/A	5%
Fenty	4%
Lego	3%
Netflix	2%
Reddit	2%
Nickelodean	2%

When respondents were asked which company was the best ally to the BLM movement, **Nike and Ben & Jerry's made up 53% of responses.**

**There were 16 other companies that were only named once.*

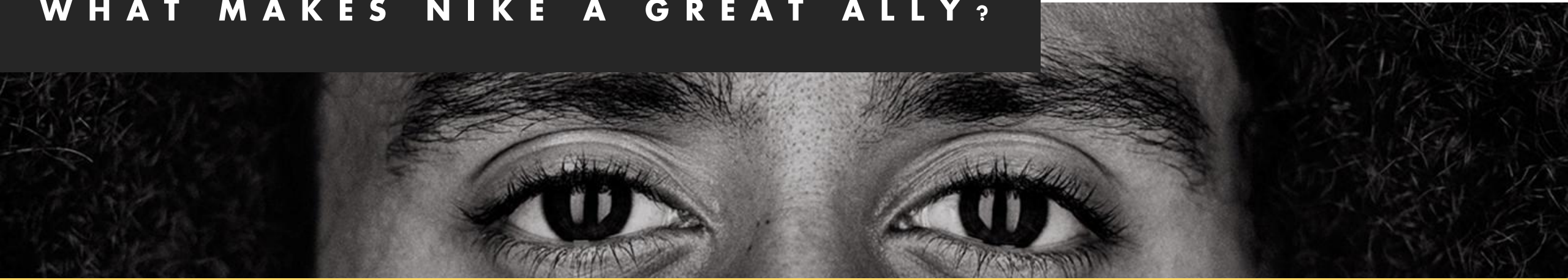


We are builders of brands, agents of change, emissaries of fame, rain-makers, mind-changers, and world-creators...

We tell, compel, and sell...and we are better at it than anyone else.

We have the power, the influence, the energy, and the creativity: what will we do with it?

WHAT MAKES NIKE A GREAT ALLY?



NIKE LIVES BLM INSIDE AND OUT

When Nike put Colin Kaepernick in their ads in 2018, they faced a backlash that resulted in the burning of Nike merchandise and a trending #justburnit hashtag. A short time later, sales soared.

"Online sales grew by 31% in the bank holiday weekend after the ad launched, according to researcher Edison Trends."¹

Nike's support of Colin Kaepernick represents a clear understanding of the company's relationship with the Black community. While it represented the brand doubling down on their support for Black lives, it was not their first foray into BLM. Nike has woven allyship into every aspect of the brand and company.



"As much as they profit from the black athlete, Nike has shown a willingness to stand up and stand by the athletes they sponsor on race issues."

—DAVID, CONSULTANT

A HISTORY OF BACKING BLACK ATHLETES²

Thirty years ago, in 1985, Nike execs, in search of a way to cement the company's hold on the athletic market, eyed a top Chicago Bulls draft pick out of North Carolina. His name was Michael Jordan. Nike pursued Jordan to make the most lucrative celebrity sporting endorsement of the time, offering him a \$500k contract stretched over five years and stock options. (A precursor to LeBron's whopping \$1B dollar lifetime deal with the Swoosh.) The first Air Jordan sneaker, released in 1985, retailed for \$65, and moved \$70 million worth of product in less than two months. The rest is history.

Studio Stayup, Medium, 2018

INSIDE NIKE³

LEADERSHIP

21%

Of Vice Presidents at Nike who work in the U.S. are from underrepresented groups, a 2 percentage point increase from 2018 to 2019

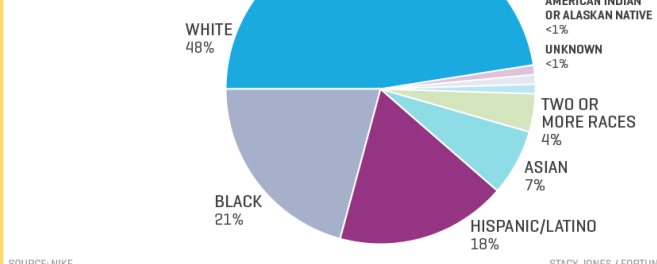
TRAINING

>50%

Of global employees took unconscious bias awareness training

REPRESENTATION

MINORITIES ARE THE MAJORITY FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER AT NIKE



PRODUCT



Nike 2016 Black History Month Collection

¹ BBC, [Nike Sales Defy Campaign Backlash](#), 2018

² Studio Stayup, [Nike Profits from Black Lives, but We Do Too](#), 2018

³ <https://purpose.nike.com/standing-up-for-equality>, 2020



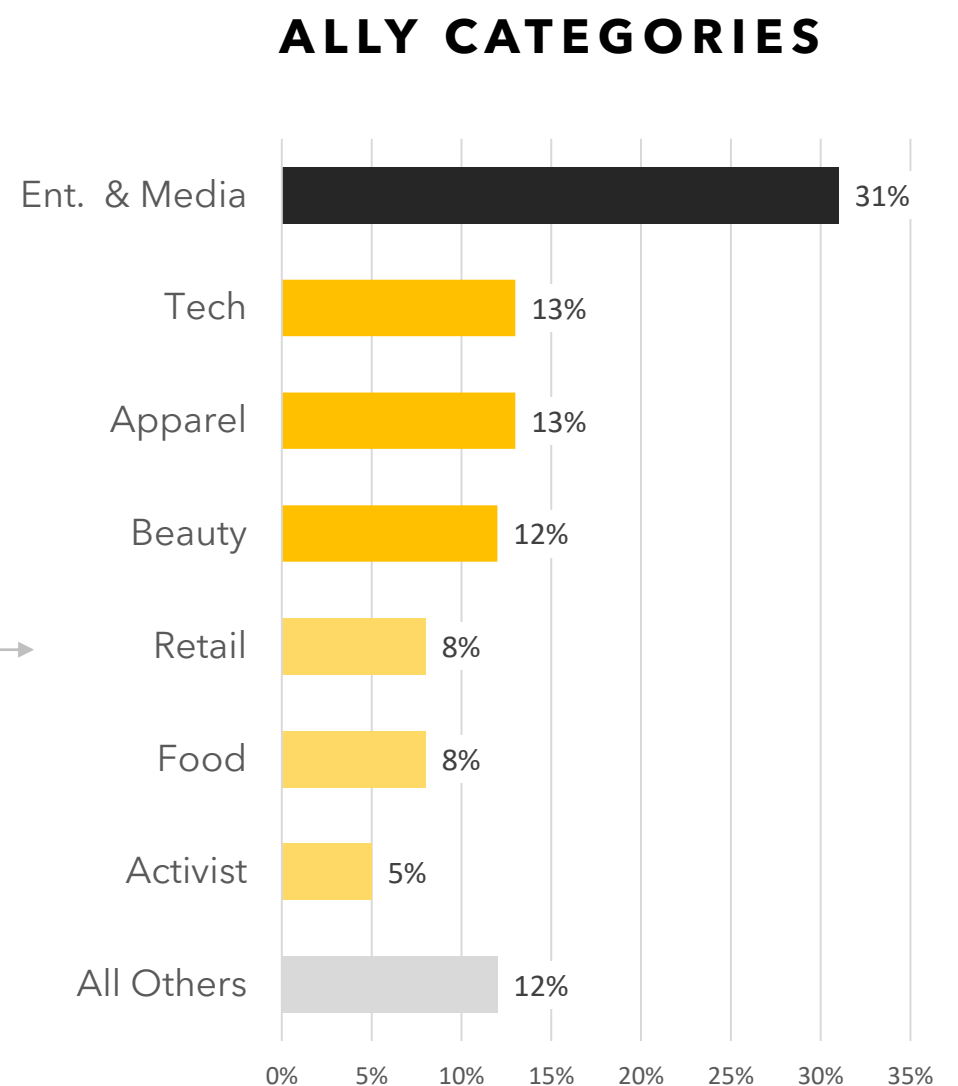
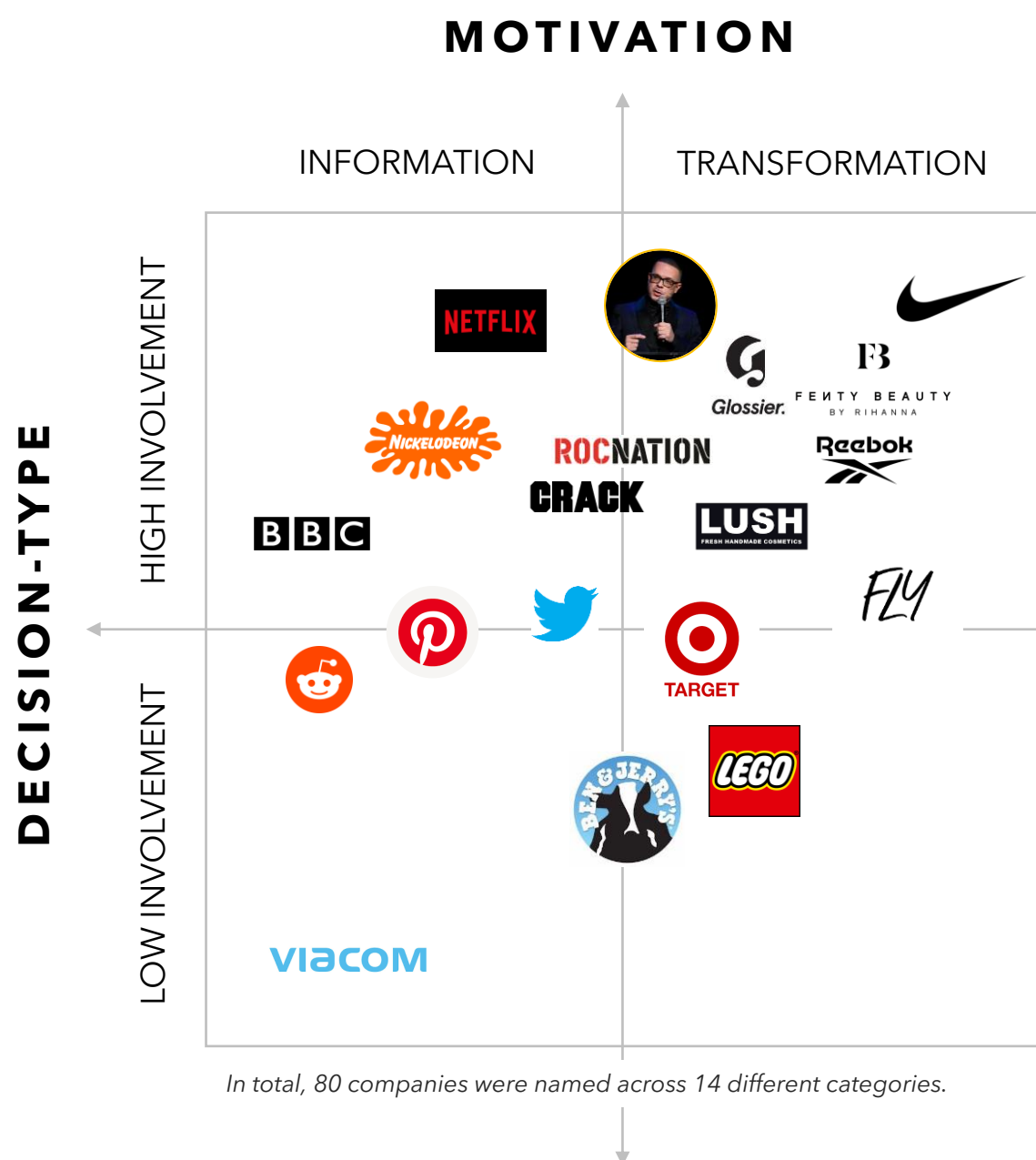
THE ALLIES LANDSCAPE

NOT ALL ALLIES ARE EASY TO SPOT

In our study, the companies that excelled at allyship were companies in high-transformation, high-involvement categories. All of the categories that surfaced to the top rely heavily on visual communication to engage with their customers. For this reason, allyship may be easier to detect for companies in these categories; that is, apparel and media brands that rely on representative images of Black people and minorities to signal allyship. Or, beauty brands that must cater to a diversity of skin tones to gain share of market.

31%
of Allies are in Entertainment and Media

ALLY CATEGORY TYPE MATRIX



BEYOND VISIBLE ALLYSHIP

Though some companies are more visible as allies (Entertainment, Beauty, Apparel), other brands are still finding ways to live their version of allyship using their products and services. For example, in response to BLM protests, LEGO paused all marketing of police-related toys—even for affiliates.



"LEGO: pulling police and white house playsets gives us the opportunity to educate our children on this movement."

—ANONYMOUS



For brands that operate in low-engagement, functional categories, service might be a better way to help.

Are there disparities in the way you are serving communities that can be remedied with initiatives that are both PR-worthy and good for Black lives in the long-run?

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ALLY?

*“There comes a time in your life when you can no longer put off choosing. You have to choose one path or the other. You can live safe and be protected by people just like you, or **you can stand up and be a leader for what is right.** Always, remember this: People never remember the crowd; **they remember the one person that had the courage to say and do what no one would do.**”*

–Shannon L. Alder, Author

WE ASKED RESPONDENTS WHAT ALLIES WERE DOING RIGHT



CORE ALLY BEHAVIORS:

- Allies put their money where their mouth is
- Allies started before BLM became a hot topic and built equality into the company DNA
- **Allies are inherently brave**, and their bravery comes through in their acts, speech, and initiatives

RESPONSES

TOPIC	% RESPONSES
Donating	45%
In Their DNA*	38%
Speaking Up	36%
Being Brave	29%
Acting (General)	14%
Committing	13%
Leading**	9%
Listening	7%
Making Space	3%

*Includes mentions of 'authenticity'
 **Includes examples of elevating Black people to leadership positions



*“[Allies are] are living [BLM] - before and after public unrest. They talk about it when it's not trending. They make D&I a priority not only within their walls and who they hire, but also who they choose to partner and work with. They judge vendors and clients based on the same principles they have internally. They talk about the uncomfortable and do it boldly. They are not worried about being ostracized...[and] in times of hardship, **they put humans first - beyond just words...**”*

–ANONYMOUS



‘BLM Washing’ is the practice of engaging in performative Black Lives Matter activities. In the long-run this strategy can erode consumer trust and do more damage than good. Allies are committed to giving on an on-going basis.

What are you willing to give to the movement?

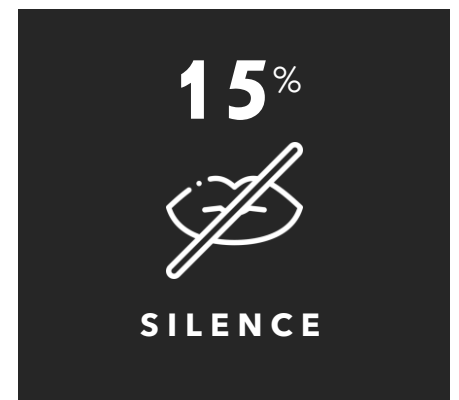
What makes the most sense for your brand and/or company?

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

"The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself—the invisible, inevitable battles inside all of us—that's where it's at."

—Jesse Owens, Athlete

WE ASKED RESPONDENTS ABOUT THE PITFALLS OF ALLYSHIP



BARRIERS TO ALLYSHIP:

- You cannot be an ally if you don't mean it—expect a backlash if you run hot and cold
- Doing nothing is worse than doing the wrong thing. You will make mistakes, as with everything in business, but you must keep going
- **Allyship must be part of your culture.**
When cultural injustice arises, ally organizations are quick to respond. They are able to respond quickly because everyone in the company understands the role they have to play in executing communications and initiatives.

RESPONSES

TOPIC	% RESPONSES
Inauthenticity*	51%
Inaction**	44%
Not in DNA	19%
Silence	15%
No Understanding	14%
Leadership	13%
Fear	13%
Vulnerability	9%
Ignoring Past	8%
Leave it to Black People	4%

*Includes mentions of 'tokenism' and 'gimmicks'
**Includes 'lack of momentum'



"Too many brands are easily dissuaded by criticism...While a simple brand post isn't enough, it's better than nothing. Use early criticism to determine other efforts."

—DAVID, STRATEGIST



Allyship of any kind is a risk. But, doing nothing is worse than getting it wrong. Every misstep is a learning opportunity. Own your mistakes and consumers will forgive you.

Have you made allyship mistakes in the past? What were they and what did you learn?

What are the risks to your business' association with BLM allyship?

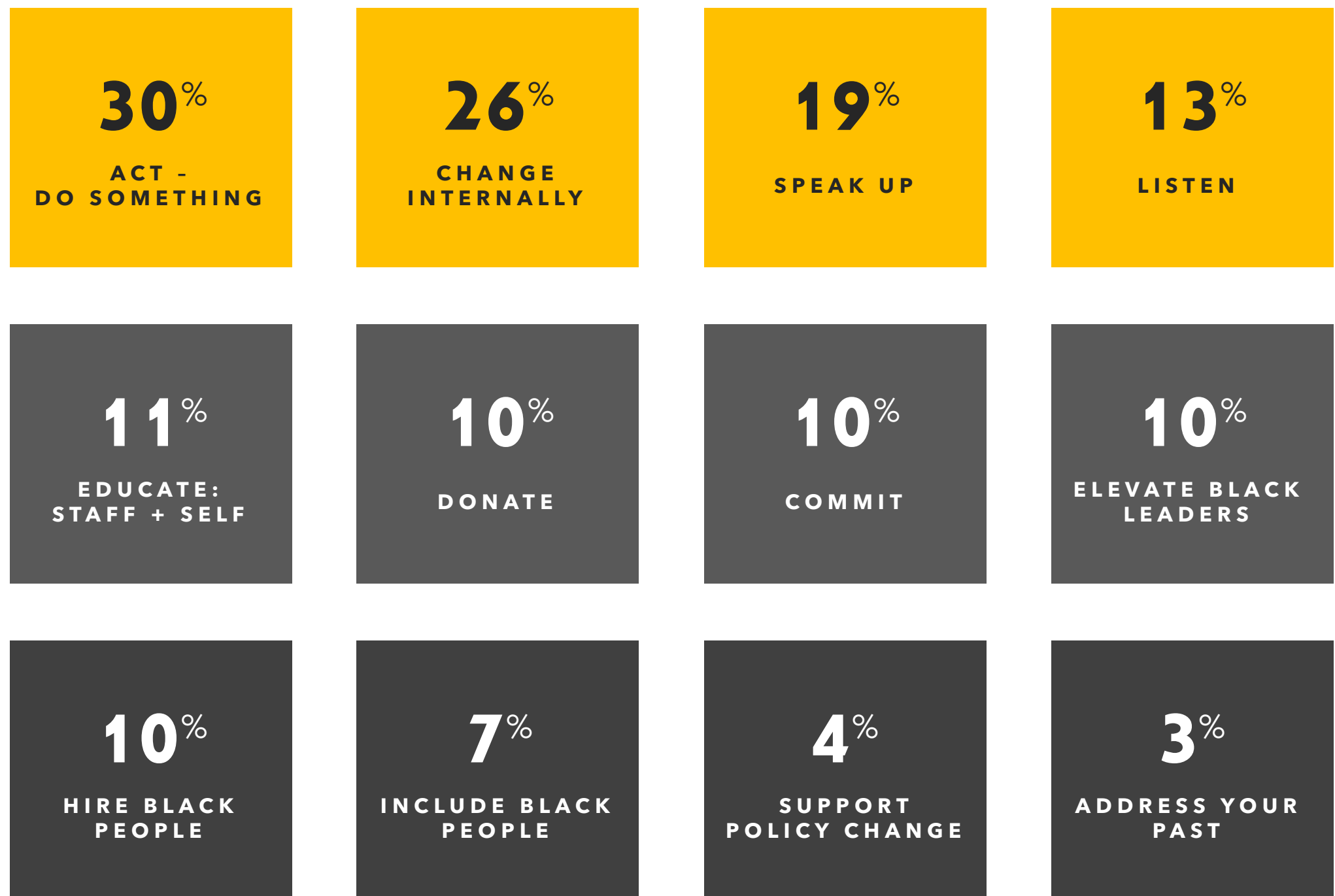
Who are you willing to potentially alienate in order to participate in the BLM movement?

WHAT'S THE ONE THING BRANDS CAN DO?

*"We are not fighting for integration, nor are we fighting for separation. **We are fighting for recognition as human beings**...In fact, we are actually fighting for rights that are even greater than civil rights and that is human rights."*

–**Malcom X**, Civil Rights Leader and Revolutionary

BLACK LIVES MATTERS TOP 12 ACTIVITIES



NICKELODEON TAKES A METAPHORIC KNEE



"Nickelodeon sacrificed something real, airtime, a viable sum of money...they're transparent about internal diversity initiatives. I'm not seeing as much [allyship] as I'd like—Black people in positions of power is the true barometer, we don't see this in advertising. True accountability is what's required."

–**LISA**, STRATEGIST

nickelodeon IS GOING OFF THE AIR FOR 8 MINUTES AND 46 SECONDS IN SUPPORT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

nickelodeon
DECLARATION OF KIDS' RIGHTS

You have the right to be seen, heard, and respected as a citizen of the world.



The right mix of BLM activities will be unique to each business, but the most important thing is that you must have processes and practices in place in order to participate effectively.

What needs to change internally in order for your organization to be an effective BLM ally?

LIQUOR

David Pressing
Jordan Rubinstein
Ed Sachse

KENNEDY WILSON
www.kennedywilson.com/brokerage

THE INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE

A CASE FOR EQUALITY

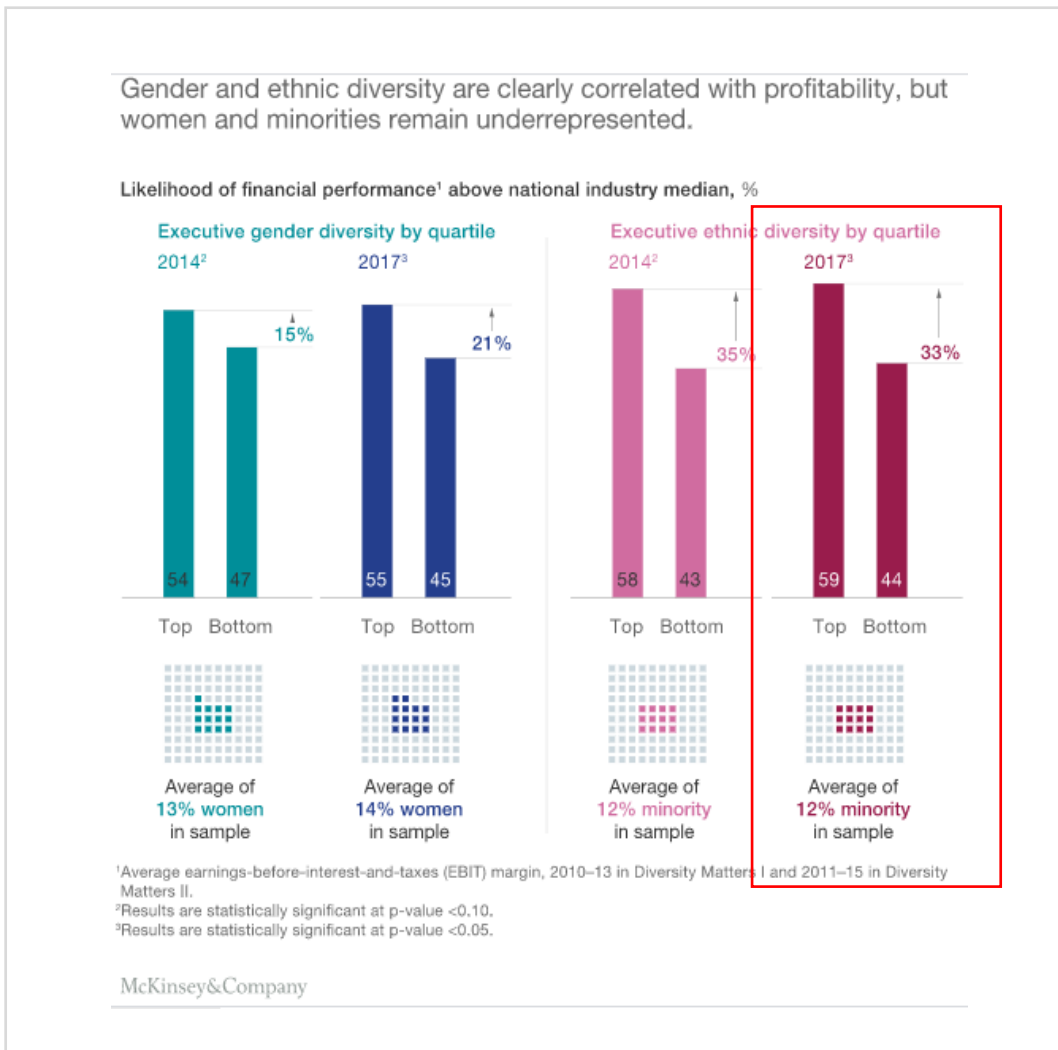
"No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people, and as long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you might otherwise."

—Marian Anderson, Singer

33%

Likelihood of above-average performance for companies with diverse executives¹

COMPANIES WITH MINORITY EXECES OUTPERFORM THEIR PEERS



WE CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, BUT UNDERPERFORM

OUR INDUSTRY IS ONE OF THE WHITEST AND LEAST BLACK

White advertisers and marketers think that our industry is doing a better job at diversity and inclusion than do their Black and Latino peers. 35% of Blacks, 31% of Latinos and 12% of Whites believe that current efforts are insufficient.

Blacks also trail their White peers in terms of organizational advancement, occupying fewer mid-level and senior positions than any other group.

THE MYERS REPORT
POWERING THE KnowledgeExchange

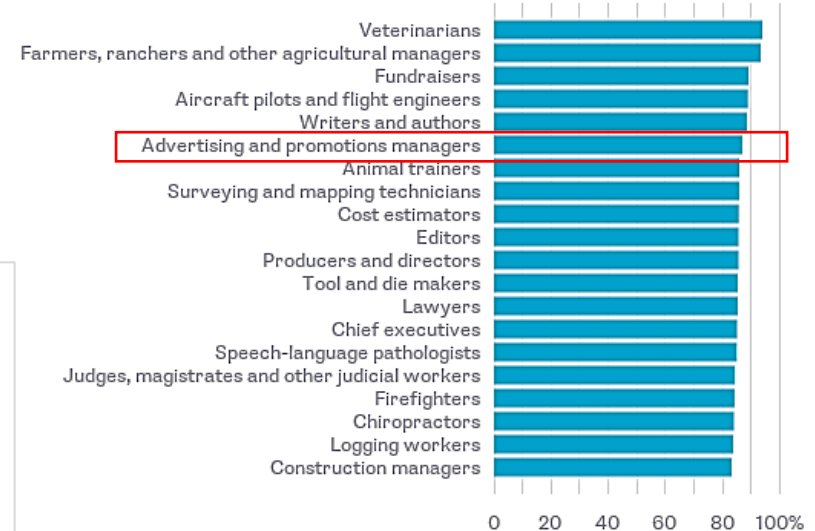
MEDIA AGENCY AND ADVERTISER MEDIA PROFESSIONAL CENSUS AS OF MARCH 15, 2020

Ethnicity	Junior %	Mid-level %	Senior %
Caucasian	76.2%	81.1%	82.9%
Hispanic or Latino	14.3%	7.1%	5.2%
Black or African American	7.1%	3.0%	3.8%
Native American or American Indian	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Asian	2.4%	7.1%	4.9%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.7%	0.3%
Other (Please type in)	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%
Prefer not to say	2.4%	4.0%	4.3%

SOURCE: The Myers Report Survey of 700 Advertiser and Agency Executives Field work 2/1-3/15/2020. Detailed methodology available at www.MyersReports.com

Jobs White People Do

Occupations with highest percentage of non-Hispanic white workers*



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
* Percentages are approximate; actual numbers are probably slightly higher.

BloombergView

Sources:
¹McKinsey, [Delivering through Diversity](#), 2018
²The Myers Report survey of 700 Advertisers, 2020, BCG, [Diversity and Inclusion Survey](#), 2017, Bloomberg View, [Most Segregated Jobs by Gender and Race](#), 2020

WHO WATCHES THE WATCHERS

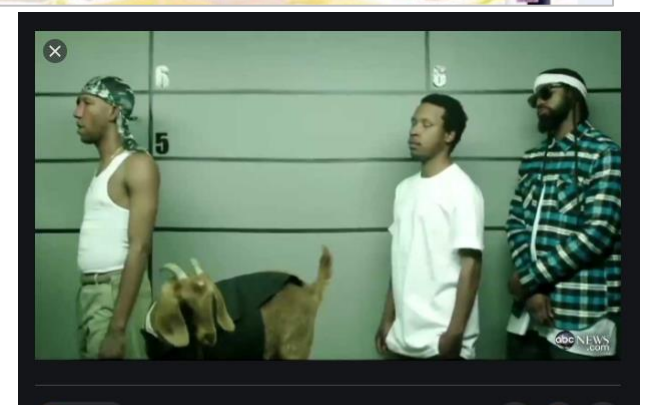
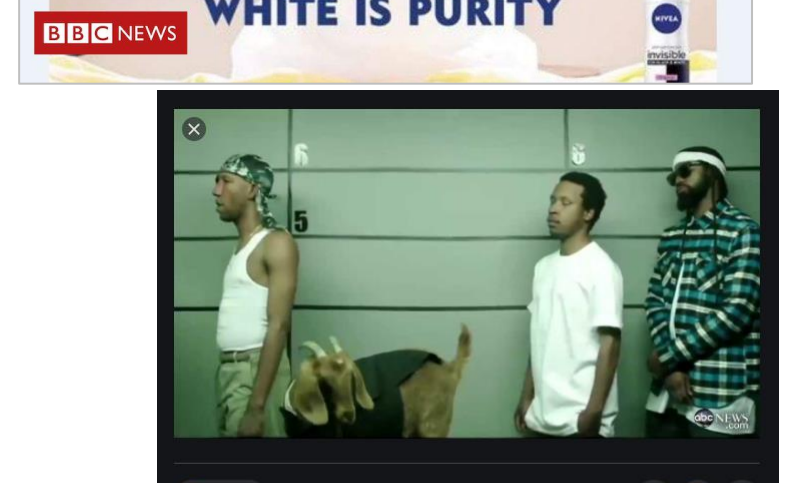
“When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. **This is not just a grab-bag candy game.**”

–Toni Morrison, Novelist

ONLY
47%
Of Black people in our study said that their workplace is safe for Black people

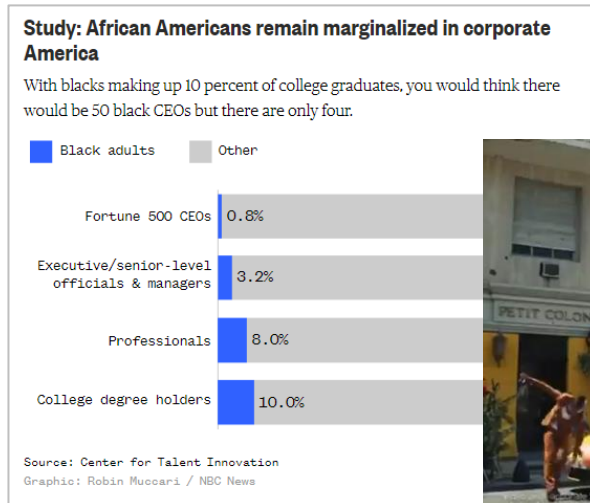
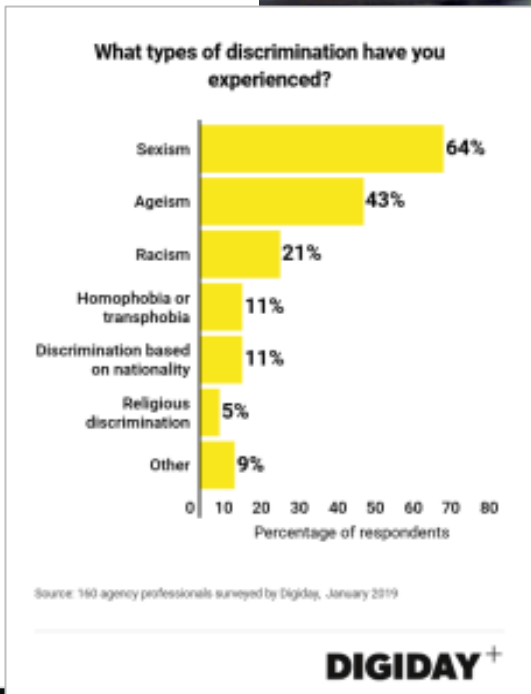


The demographic shift of the ad audience has far outpaced the demographic shift of the ad industry.



Were there witnesses?
Plenty, but everyone was too afraid to back me up. I didn't feel comfortable going to HR.

How did that impact you?
I fell into depression. I had to get signed off work [by a doctor] at times. That makes it even worse as it gives them something else to complain about. But you feel like if you raise the issue of race, they will try and get rid of you. Media and ad agencies are at the forefront of singing and dancing about gender and sexual orientation – things that identify us and the storytelling – but when it comes to your beliefs, you're made to feel awkward.



The numbers bear this out. People from BAME backgrounds (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) filled less than 2 in 10 (13.8 percent) of all agency jobs in 2018, up from 12.9 percent the previous year, according to trade body Institute of Practitioners in Advertising's study of its members in the U.K. The progress is even slower in the C-suite where just 5.5 percent of roles are filled by people from BAME backgrounds, up from 4.7 percent the previous year.

What do you tell young people?

I was told once, if you want to get anywhere, you have to shut up and work five times harder than the white man next to you. I start at 9 a.m. and don't leave until 11 p.m. Everyone else shuts their laptops down at 5:30 to 6 p.m. But I'm scrutinized. The upper echelons of media and advertising is all very glamorous. But grads that want to move up will have to change something about their personality.



Sources: Digiday, [Racism Remains a Problem for Agencies](#), 2019, [Center for Talent Innovation](#), 2019, Think with Google, [The Case for Diversity in Advertising](#), 2017



Mistakes can be a catalyst for change. Dove, for instance, used their mistakes to transform the brand and become allies. Even taking a stance on public policy issues as with [The Crown Act](#).

If you had a magic wand, what would you do to make your marketing more inclusive today?

WHAT DOES EQUALITY REALLY MEAN?

"A business must get their own house in order. Be or become an agent of positive change in your own enterprise and adopt responsible practices to eliminate the risks that often lie at the root of inequality and poverty."

–**Richard Branson**, Business Leader

ONLY

1/3

Of respondents worked in companies with Black decision-makers

HOW MANY vs. HOW EQUAL

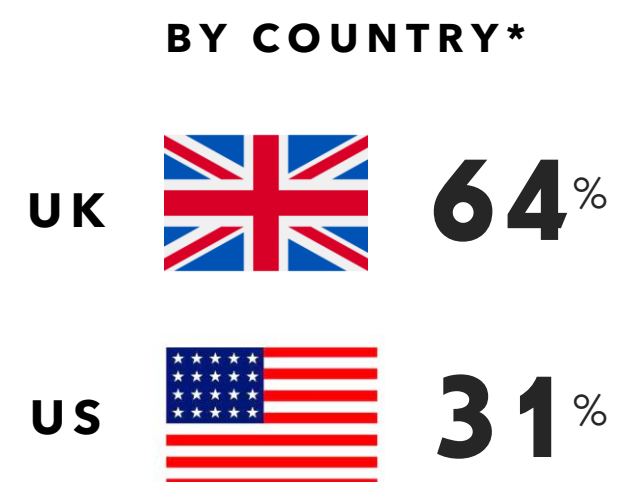
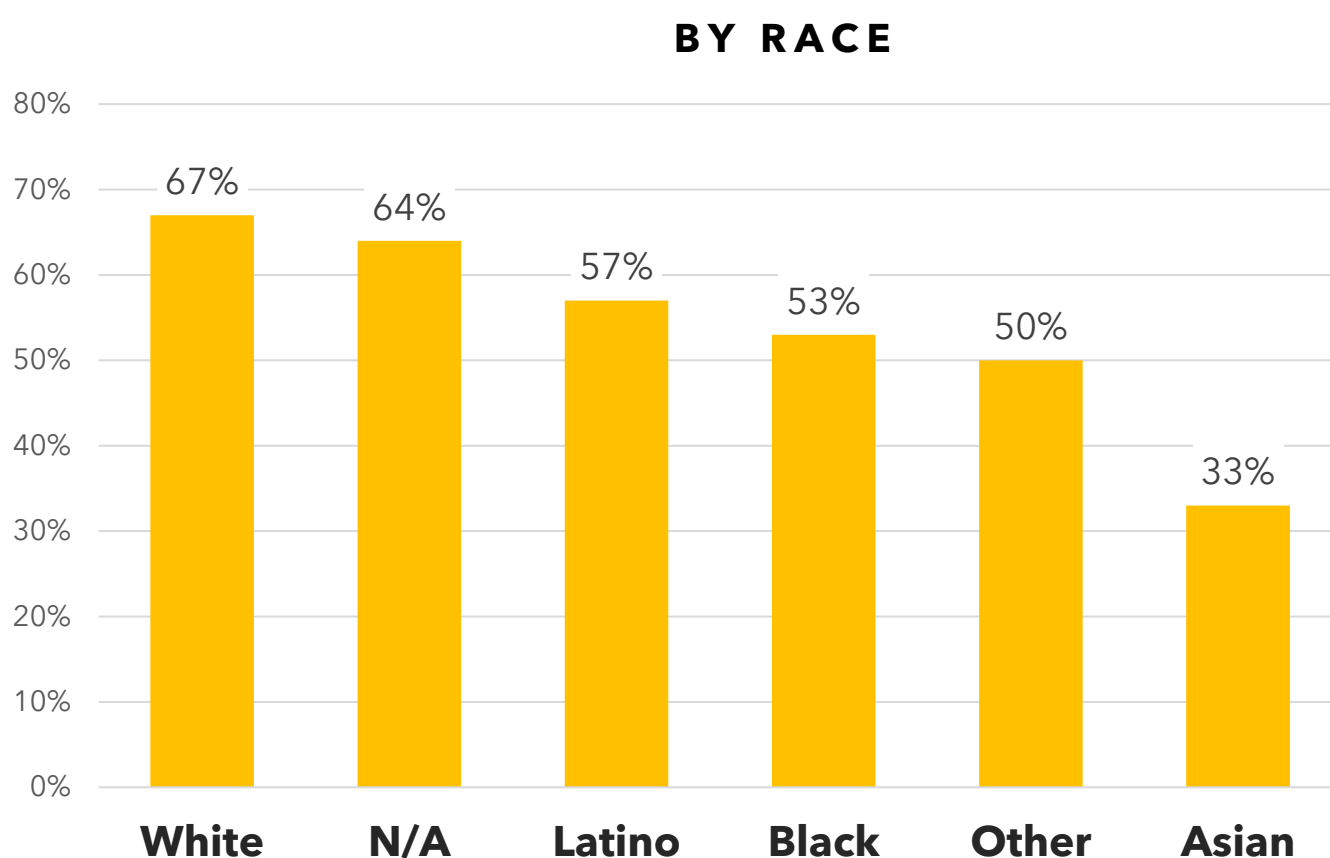
Representation is not enough. We focus on quotas and representation, but **more important than how many is how equal?** If the Black people in our organizations exist in the margins it will come through in the work. It will come through in our every action.

As above, so below. As within, so without.

BLACK PEOPLE ARE NOT REPRESENTED IN LEADERSHIP

White respondents are least likely to report working in environments where there were Black decision-makers, indicating that there is a direct correlation between diverse working environments with Black people in positions of leadership.

WORKPLACE HAS NO BLACK DECISION-MAKERS



*Responses where country was detectable although country was not requested



Diversity in leadership is important from both a signalling standpoint, and it's also important in creating an environment of inclusion. It's not about replacing existing non-Black people doing good work, but it is about making space.

Are there Black decision-makers within your organization?

Are there Black people within your organization that are ready for advancement?

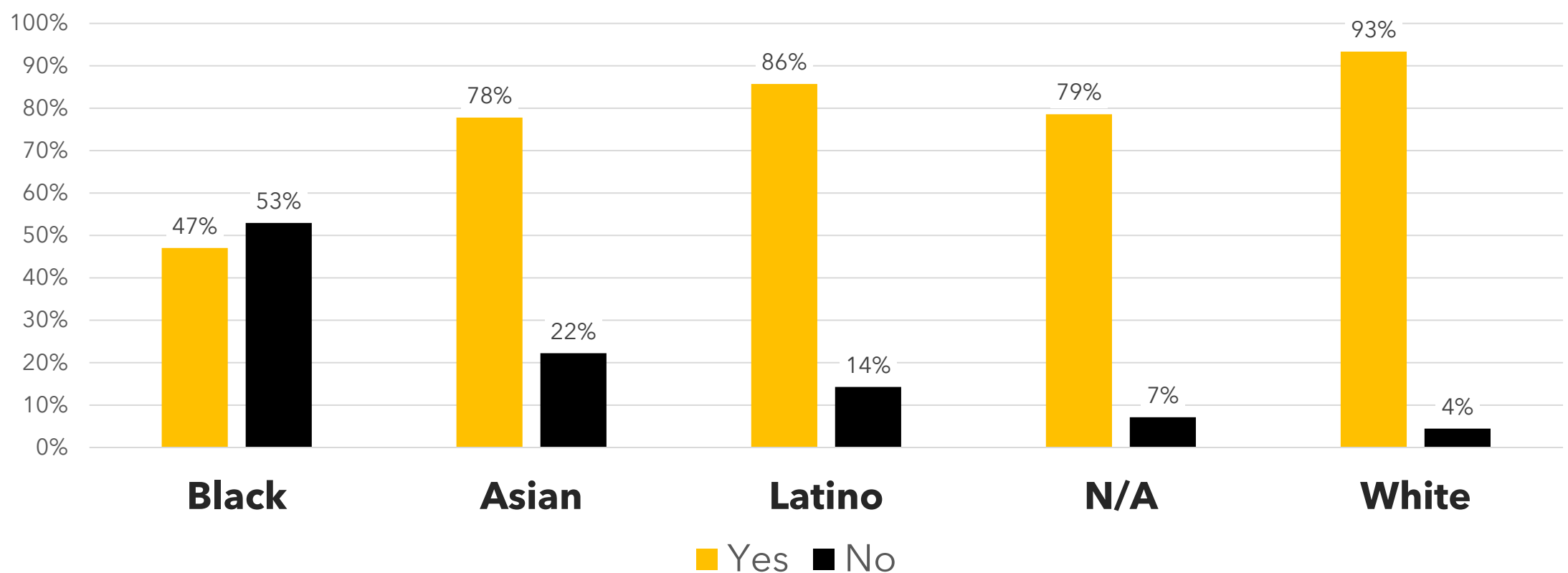
How can you develop your talent pipeline?

BLACKS EXPERIENCE WORK DIFFERENTLY

"I am an invisible man. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me...When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me."

—**Ralph Ellison**, Novelist and Scholar

IS YOUR WORKPLACE SAFE FOR BLACK PEOPLE?



PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORKPLACE DIFFER BY RACE

- White respondents were almost twice as likely to report that their workplace was safe for Black people than their Black counterparts
- 33% of respondents who said that their workplace was safe for Black people, said so conditionally, caveating answers with 'Think' or 'Hope' because they could not speak for others within the organization
- Gaps in perception were consistent in the US and UK



"We as Black people enter the workplace knowing what we can and cannot say. We have to check our mannerisms at the door, speak a certain way and not be true to ourselves. This is particularly obvious to those who are entry level or just starting out in their careers."

—**RAY**, EVENTS



In our research, the busyness of agencies and their intense focus on client problems were cited as factors contributing to inattention to matters of race.

Within your organization, what sacrifices are you willing to make in time or resources to shine a light on challenges?

What actions can you take to help Black employees feel safer at work?

BLACK LEADERSHIP CHANGES PERCEPTIONS

"...But a role model in the flesh provides more than inspiration; his or her very existence is confirmation of possibilities one may have every reason to doubt, saying, 'Yes, someone like me can do this.' "

—**Sonia Sotomayor**, Supreme Court Justice

ONLY

1/3

Of Black male respondents said that their workplace is safe for Black people

WHEN BLACK LEADERSHIP WAS IN PLACE RESPONDENTS PERCEIVED THE WORKPLACE AS BEING SAFER FOR BLACK PEOPLE

When Black decision-makers were in place, **100% of White people** reported that the workplace was a safe place for Black people, **75% of Black people** echoed that sentiment.

92%

of people who said that their company had Black decision-makers perceived those environments to be safe for Black people

4X

White respondents were 4X more likely than their Black counterparts to say a workplace was safe for Black people when there were NO Black decision-makers

78%

Of Black people felt that their workplace was NOT safe for Black people when there were no Black decision-makers

LEADERSHIP + HR MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- When asked what made a safe workplace, respondents answered: **HR, Leadership, and Culture**
- When speaking about challenges to having a safe workplace for Black people, respondents cited: **Lack of diversity, Leadership, and HR**



"I have never been in a work environment that was safe for a Black person."

—ANONYMOUS



"I've worked in advertising for 20 years and have never worked for a Black manager. Ever."

—ANONYMOUS



Blacks were 13X more likely to say that their workplace wasn't safe for Black people. Similarly, even with Black decision-makers in place, Whites were still 25% more likely to think that their workplace was safe for Black people.

What can you do to elevate the voices and experiences of Black people within your organization?

WHERE ARE BLACK WORKERS TO GO FOR HELP?

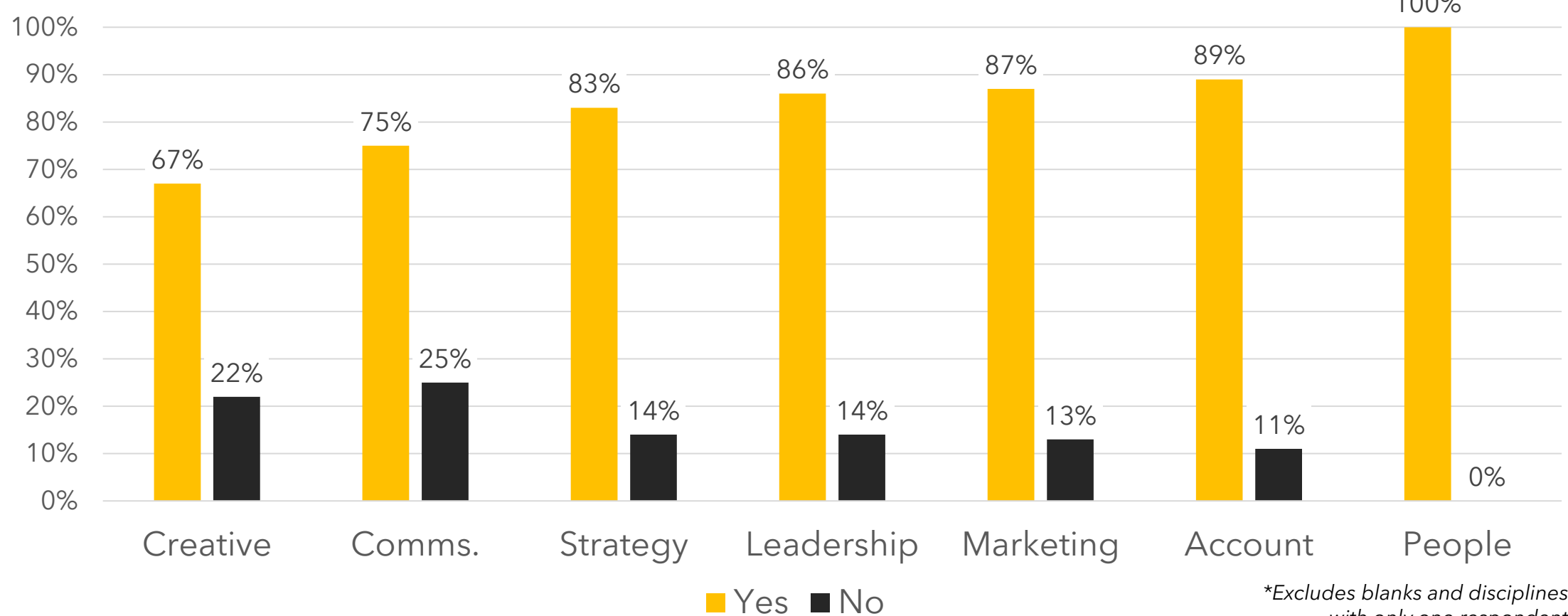
"...all the fears with which I had grown up, and which were now a part of me and controlled my vision of the world, rose up like a wall between the world and me..."

—James Baldwin, Author and Activist

64%

Of Black men and 61% of Black women report being on guard at work because of anticipated bias—more than any other ethnic group¹

IS YOUR PLACE OF WORK SAFE - BY DISCIPLINE*



*Excludes blanks and disciplines with only one respondent
**People includes HR and Talent

IS HR A SAFE SPACE?

Those who work in HR and Talent roles have a strikingly divergent perspective of the dynamics of their workplace to those in other disciplines: 100% of HR and Talent professionals answered that their place of work is safe for Black people.

Verbatim responses indicate that people are uncomfortable raising race-related concerns with HR.



"What does safe even mean?"

Do I think I can bring up a racial problem to HR? No.

Are there enough black people present to say how I feel about the organisation without it jeopardising my future? No."

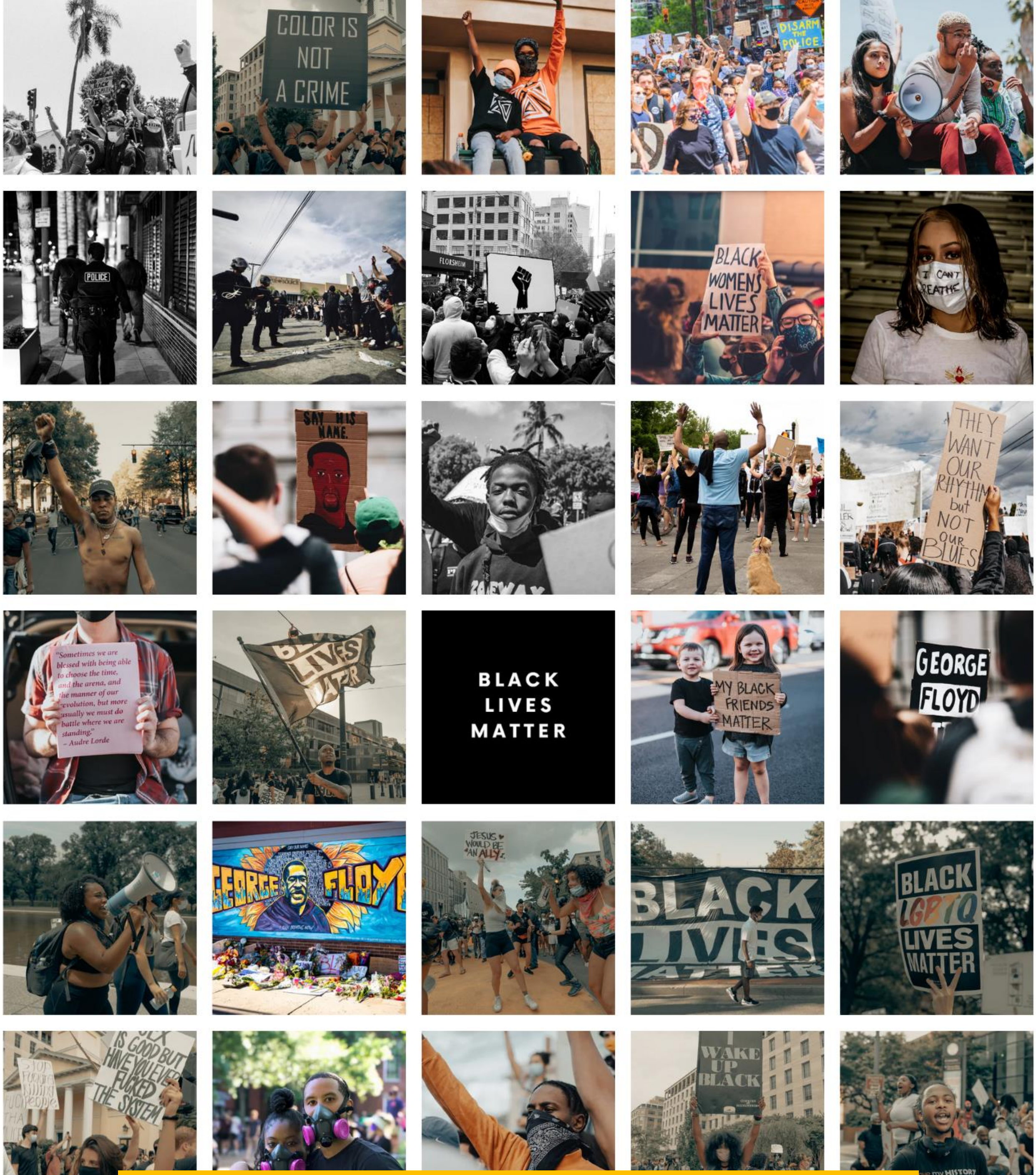
—ANONYMOUS



It is a common understanding that the role of HR is to protect the company. In situations of racial discrimination, or even consistent bias, where are workers to turn for help? How many people leave a company, out of fear, without ever speaking up?

What internal practices are in place in your company to support workers coping with bias and discrimination at work?

¹Catalyst.org, Emotional Tax Report, 2019



CHECKLIST FOR CHANGE



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

–**Margaret Mead**, Anthropologist

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MOVE THE NEEDLE

1. CHECK IN WITH YOUR PEOPLE

- ✓ Sign your company up for [THE CHECK-IN](#), a yearly survey about BLM and Advertising
- ✓ Ask the Black people in your company and personal network how they are doing; check-in on yourself, too!

2. HAVE THE TALK

- ✓ Start talking with your trusted peers about what's going on
- ✓ Start talking about BLM and diversity within your company and with your clients

3. MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

- ✓ Update your company metrics and incentive structures to include eNPS (employee NPS) and retention
- ✓ Look at your stock and flow data: How is Black talent moving through your company?

4. MAKE SPACE

- ✓ Make space for Black lives within your company: through hiring, on your pitch teams, in your board rooms, even down to your brief template and research requirements

5. SHARE

- ✓ Share this research and your wildest BLM aspirations far and wide
- ✓ Share your time: sign up for our [EQUALS=EQUALS](#) two-way mentorship program

6. DONATE

- ✓ Review your company finances and set up recurring donations to BLM, Diversity, and Social Justice charities
- ✓ Think critically about your products and services and see if there are ways you can give in-kind

7. USE YOUR VOICE

- ✓ Use your platform to speak out about BLM matters that align to your company's mission and values
- ✓ Understand that you're going to make mistakes: **Keep trying**

8. BUILD A BLM CULTURE

- ✓ Hire Black people, invest in them, and treat them well once they join your company
- ✓ Promote and develop Black talent: everyone should leave your company better off than when they joined

9. ASK FOR HELP

- ✓ We exist as part of a vibrant ecosystem and we are here to support and lift one another up. Ask your peers, ask your partners, ask internally for help with your BLM priorities.

10. GET CURRENT



- ✓ Follow [@ThisIsTheCurrent](#) on Instagram to stay up to date on our research
- ✓ Use the hashtag **#EqualsEquals** in your posts

NOTHING CHANGES IF NOTHING CHANGES

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

–**James Baldwin**, Writer and Activist

We talk a lot about diversity in Advertising & Marketing, but diversity isn't the problem. Bigotry is the problem. In our heart of hearts, we know this to be true. It's why companies' diversity numbers are difficult to access. It's why there is no global accounting for workplace diversity. It's why there are no Black people in the rooms where decisions are made. We know, but we do not say. Even our best efforts in diversity training, never truly address bigotry itself. How could they? Bigotry has been around longer than any of us and it is likely to outlive us too.



In 2019 Gucci pulled a racist blackface sweater and issued an apology after customer and media backlash

Bigotry has gravity, weight, and presence. What do we have? When confronted with it, the hairs on the back of our necks stand on end. We can feel it, but when we reach out to touch it we grasp at straws. How do we take hold of bigotry? When we try to change it, it recoils; only to rise vengefully when least expected. There are things we can do. We must try until all of our fumbling efforts have undeniable impact.

85% of Americans expect companies to help address racial inequality.¹

We talk about bravery and purpose, but without action what do those words really mean? As a community, we must challenge what seems impossible.



THE PROJECT TEAM

This document was created by a small, dedicated team who are passionate about Advertising and its potential to do good in the world.



JEN

BRAND EXPERIENCE
STRATEGIST



RODNEY

CULTURAL
ANTROPOLOGIST



LEILA

BRAND & CREATIVE
STRATEGIST

For more information about this project, and forthcoming research:
Follow @[ThisIsTheCurrent](#) on Instagram, Email: TheCurrent@Docent.co

SPECIAL THANKS

**A very special THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the survey,
And to everyone who volunteered to help.
PLEASE SHARE THIS RESEARCH**



ABOUT BLACK LIVES MATTER



Image: Man walks in front of a Black Lives Matter flag (IG: @clay.banks)

CREATING SPACE FOR BLACK IMAGINATION AND INNOVATION

"**#BlackLivesMatter** was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives."

Source: BlackLivesMatter.com

And who will join this standing up
and the ones who stood without sweet company
will sing and sing
back into the mountains and
if necessary
even under the sea

we are the ones we have been waiting for

–**June Jordan**, Author & Poet



COLOR IS
NOT
A CRIME

WORKSHEETS

BLM LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK



In order to succeed at banishing systemic racism within your company, you'll have to give your Black Lives Matter initiatives the same attention that you do other important initiatives within your organization. Put together a team to craft a BLM vision, and create a portfolio of activities that tie to your strategy. Set BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals). Schedule regular check-ins with the executing team so that there's accountability. Review your BLM strategy on a regular basis.

BLM is not a trend, it's an imperative.

OUR VISION IS CLEAR. BY 20__ WE WILL BE THE MOST RACIALLY EQUITABLE ORGANIZATION IN OUR INDUSTRY.



OUR PATH IS CLEAR. BY 20__ WE WILL HAVE THE HIGHEST eNPS FOR BLACK EMPLOYEES IN OUR INDUSTRY

BLM LEADERSHIP WORKSHEET



WHY is your organization getting involved with the BLM Movement?

WHAT is your vision for BLM within your organization?



WHAT measurable result will you achieve by executing your vision?

THINGS TO PONDER

We build knowledge through inquiry. This document posed many rhetorical questions. Here is a compendium of all of the questions posed within this document. Trying to answer these questions may help you build and refine your BLM vision, purpose, and initiative portfolio.

To think that the statement “Black Lives Matter” stirs controversy is a symptom of a broader problem. Matters.

What’s more rudimentary or base than matter?

Think for a moment on the things that matter to you...

How would you respond if those matters were taken from you?

What lengths would you go to hold onto and protect them?

What would you not do?

What will you do?*

Leaders must cultivate empathy for the people in their care. There are a few questions you can ask yourself to better empathize with Black people inside your company.

Would you want to be a Black person in the organization that you lead? Why?

Do you think you would be where you are today if you were Black? Why?

Consumers expect a lot from us.

Do we as marketers expect as much of ourselves?

How can we expect to serve diverse populations when they’re not represented within our industry?

Is Nike the only brand with a relationship with Black People?

We tell, compel, and sell...and we are better at it than anyone else.

We have the power, the influence, the energy, and the creativity: what will we do with it?

For brands that operate in low-engagement, functional categories, service might be a better way to help.

Are there disparities in the way you are serving communities that can be remedied with initiatives that are both PR-worthy and good for Black lives in the long-run?

BLM Washing is the practice of engaging in performative Black Lives Matter activities. In the long-run this strategy can erode consumer trust, and do more damage than good. Allies are committed to giving, on an on-going basis.

What are you willing to give to the movement?

What makes the most sense for your brand and/or company?

How can you set up sustainable initiatives that you can commit to long term?

Allyship of any kind requires risk. But, doing nothing is worse than getting it wrong. Every misstep is a learning opportunity. Own your mistakes and consumers will forgive you.

What are the risks to your business associated with BLM allyship?

Who are you willing to alienate in order to participate in the BLM movement?

Have you made BLM mistakes in the past? What were they, what did you learn?

The right mix of BLM activities will be unique to each business, but the most important thing is that you must have processes and practices in place in order to participate effectively.

What needs to change internally in order for your organization to be an effective BLM ally?

Sometimes mistakes can be a catalyst for change. Dove used mistakes to transform the entire brand.

If you had a magic wand, what would you do to make your marketing more inclusive today?

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