



sample  
inspiration report

what do black consumers  
expect from brands?



# table of contents

methodology	3
insight summary	4
1. to be seen	5
2. to allow them a seat at the table	10
3. to develop a stronger sense of empathy	15
4. to put (your brand's) money where your mouth is	21
5. to commit, and communicate, consistently	26
our respondents	32

# methodology

dig recruited 9 respondents each, in chicago and los angeles. markets were chosen according to the needs and preferences of members of the collective.

all respondents were:

- african american
- between the ages of 25 and 70
- owners of their own homes
- making at least \$75k annually

dig conducted 30–45 minute zoom interviews with each of the 18 respondents. dig then presented recommendations for the top 6 respondents and, in collaboration with members of the collective, chose the final 6 respondents for in-depth interviews and a full day of filmed observation.

interviews took place via zoom between march 1 and 8, 2021. filmed observation took place in respondent homes between march 9 and 14, 2021.

# insight summary

## what do black consumers expect from brands?

1    sorry, not included here

not included in this sample

2    to have a seat at the table

hiring and supporting black employees is a win-win; brands get hard-working people who can help them modernize their perspective from the inside out.

3    sorry, not included here

not included in this sample

4    sorry, not included here

not included in this sample

5    sorry, not included here

not included in this sample



2

to have a seat at the table

hiring and supporting black employees is a win-win; brands get hard-working people who can help them modernize their perspective from the inside out



*"you've got to know that you don't let the black kid wear a t-shirt that says coolest monkey in the jungle. that's (what happens) when you don't have black people working there." – nneka*

a lack of black representation in media has led to numerous collective cultural face palm moments over the last several years, and similar situations seem to occur throughout corporate america every year. nonetheless, america is a media-obsessed culture and black america would like to see it from the inside.

\* h&m created a line of children's clothing featuring jungle themes, and shot images of multicultural child models wearing the clothing, without considering the implications of some of the imagery. (2018)

**nneka, 43**

for me a brand should employ black people. that's the best way to get an opportunity. being inclusive, you know. but more than anything, i think giving them the opportunity, giving everybody the opportunity to go get a corporate job. you don't know how many black kids go to school with the dream of getting out and working in corporate america, climbing the ladder, becoming a c.e.o.

**fundi, 63**

these brands have to change their intention. is their intention just to make money and see their quarterly growth from sales in black communities? or is the intent while doing that there's a beneficial factor on the other side? if you're not at the table you're not part of the plan. you're not part of the planning. planning is important; what are you trying to get out of it? i prefer to see us at the table than us in the commercial. let us sit at the table with you. who's at the table making the decisions? so many times we're not.

**bryant, 53**

it doesn't make sense to be in 2021 and you not be diverse. that's ludicrous to me. it's ludicrous to have no african americans on your board of directors. it's ludicrous for all this stuff to happen and you only have black sales managers on your floor, and the rest of the people are sweeping up the place. there's no excuse to be out of time and out of step with the rest of the world. no excuse.

**moses, 30**

i think the biggest thing, the biggest hurdle in order to gain the trust of the black community is really just being authentic in your intentions, because we're like a scorned lover. you know, we're not going to easily trust. you have to really show us your intentions. don't just go off stereotypes. really have those conversations, really do research. talk to actual black people. once you do that then you can build upon that and really have a strategy to really connect with the black community.

**cheryl, 64**

if you as a corporation can just give the person that he's qualified. maybe he might be a little less qualified, he might be a little bit more. but you hire them. it's not the letter-writing, it goes from the beginning. being on the board, not just the token. hire that african american person. give them the job. let them be promoted. make it be ingrained. not just the one, the two or three people.

**andrea, 43**

giving people a voice is huge. i would love to have been a student and a major corporation comes and says, 'hey, we want to hear what you guys are thinking. come on over.' it would say to me i'm out of touch with these people, so i'm going to reach out to the people who are in touch with them, and i'm going to hire them and let them be a part of my major corporation in attempts to help my major corporation reach everybody. but if i keep hiring everybody that's just like me, i'm just building up that ladder. i'm not spreading wide enough in doing it that way. putting people in that position that have the voice, then it's that much more like me. i would like to see the action.



# 2. moving forward

## what to do?

this is fairly straightforward: hiring comes first. however, the job doesn't end once qualified people are at their computers. they need to feel valued and given access to opportunities for growth and advancement, which can be difficult in some corporate cultures.

- are racial issues and racism discussed openly in your company culture? if not, what would it take to make that possible?
- do you have high-level commitment to addressing and correcting racial issues if they arise?

## who does this well? nike

nike has repeatedly increased its diversity hiring targets, and has tied executive compensation to meeting those targets.

## need to know more?

[Magic Johnson: 'People want to see America change'](#)

espn | march 3, 2021

magic johnson's advocacy for more black coaches and execs in the nba. fundi commented directly on this issue, saying, "those owners are usually white and don't let outsiders in."

[Working While Black: Stories from black corporate America](#)

fortune | june 16, 2020

details microaggressions against black people in work environments that could be avoided with adequate representation in c-suite positions.

[Study examines why Black Americans remain scarce in executive suites](#)

new york times | 12.9.19

summarizes results of a report, "being black in corporate america," by the center for talent innovation, detailing the difficulties preventing black advancement in american companies.