
Justice & Brand Accountability

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Introduction

On May 25, 2020, U.S. citizen George Floyd was carelessly killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Murdered by a police officer in broad daylight with a sworn duty to ‘protect and serve’ him. The horror of the act, captured on a cellphone and witnessed by us all during a non-stop COVID-19 news cycle, laid bare what has been a fact of life for Black people and people of color (POC) in the U.S., and around the world: freedom does not mean equality.

To start, let’s full-throatedly stipulate some basic and fundamental facts about the world we live in. First, systemic racism is real; born of a set of codified biases and bigotry that pervades and impacts every aspect of our societies and lives: employment, housing, education, policing, and beyond. Racial inequality is real.

Second, in moments like this, we hope that actors of good conscience within a civil society will advocate for equality. But calls for ‘equality’ are about making things ‘even.’ Even distribution of rights and opportunities. Equality assumes that everyone is starting off from the same position. That the playing field is level in each actor’s favor, and that all they need to do is apply themselves to the task or job before them, and that their level of success in that endeavor will be a function of their individual merit.

Third, for Minneapolis, a city still shook by the deaths of Philando Castile and Michael Brown years prior to George Floyd, citizens understand that equality is not a declaration. Instead, equality can only come from dismantling the system. The systemic nature of racism means not just that Black people and POC aren’t being given their fair due in terms of opportunity, resource, and treatment; it means that they are starting from a disadvantage.

As a result of those three truths, this paper will focus on Justice and Accountability.

Arguably, justice is only achieved when the most vulnerable party is protected, made whole, and/or becomes better off. As a result, reform and rights generally focus on those three outcomes. Justice demands that we radically transform the system. 'We' being the operative word. All of us. Everyday citizens, leaders, and beyond. And that includes brands. Racial inequity is both a collective problem to redress and a shared responsibility to solve. The greater the resources, influence, and platform of any individual actor, the greater their accountability. Brands have played a meaningful role in pursuing justice in the past; in the #MeToo movement, in LGBTQ rights, and in gender equality. Once again, history is calling on brands to use their power, influence, and scale for social justice related to racial inequity.

Because we find ourselves at an inflection point in history, for many, there is no going back. We are no longer in a moment where we are willing to tolerate either pernicious injustice or a blind indifference to it.

Why Should Brands Act?

This is a time for intentional, swift, and meaningful action. The onus is not only on people to buck institutions, but also on the institutions to buck the status quo of society and their role within it.

In recent decades, brands and consumers have become so much more than just buyers and sellers. As companies became beholden to millennial purchasing power, we saw values-based purchasing come into the spotlight. With Gen Z, who will soon surpass Millennials as the most populous generation on Earth, there is even more emphasis placed on social activism. Not only does Gen Z purchase based on shared values, but also they want to work for employers whose values align with theirs.¹ And as brands have increasingly taken and sought roles in culture, we've witnessed the beginnings of brands as activists.

Social activism is not just a luxury — it is now a requirement. A brand taking a stance, speaking up, and acting on justice is about doing both the “right” thing and the “necessary” thing for your business, customers, and communities. In order to build your brand for days, months, years, and decades, you must view what's ethical as what's practical. In this age, acting socially consciously is imperative to attract and retain talent; to attract and retain customers; and, ultimately, to drive better business performance in communities that face inequities.

Achieving racial parity will not be easy. In fact, it requires adopting a new ethos — one that demands empathy, humility, candor, consistency, and courage.

¹ 77% of Gen Z respondents to a Deloitte survey prioritized working at organizations whose values align with their own.

MAJORITY CONCERNED ABOUT RACISM IN AMERICA

Percent who are concerned

I am concerned about systemic racism and racial injustice in this country

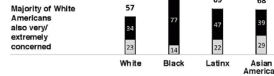
63%

21 42

U.S. general population

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and Racial Justice in America. Q1. How concerned are you about systemic racism and racial injustice in this country? 7-point scale: code 0, very concerned; code 7, extremely concerned. General population, U.S., by age, gender and political affiliation, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian American populations.

Communities



Political affiliation



Age and gender

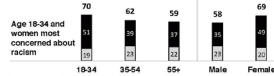


Image A: The majority of Americans are concerned about systemic racism and racial injustice in the U.S. This holds true when broken out across racial divides as well, with 64.67% of non-Black (White, Latinx, and Asian) people affirming their concern.

AGE 35+ MORE LIKELY TO SEE MORAL/SOCIETAL OBLIGATION; AGE 18-34 WANT BRANDS TO STAND WITH THEM

Of those who agree brands should publicly speak out on racial injustice, percent who say each is a reason brands must do so

	General population	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	Male	Female
Moral obligation	56	44	58	69	58	54
Owe it to employees	52	48	50	57	53	50
Fill government leadership void	50	43	50	61	51	50
Want brands to stand with me	41	44	38	40	40	41
Attract and keep customers	39	38	43	36	41	37

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and Racial Justice in America. Q2. Why do you believe that brands and companies should publicly speak out against systemic racism and racial injustice following the death of George Floyd and other recent racially motivated attacks on Blacks? Pick all that apply. Question asked of those who believe brands should speak out against racism and racial injustice (Q1). General population, U.S., and by age and gender.

Image B: Of those who agree that brands should speak out on racial injustice, the 35+ crowd view it as a moral obligation and necessity to attract and keep customers, while those ages 18-34 take it more personally, wanting brands to stand with them and uphold their values.

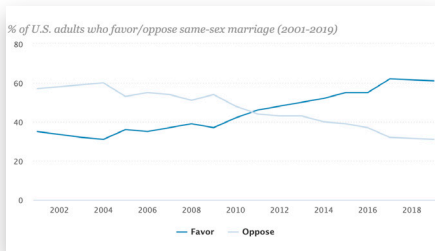
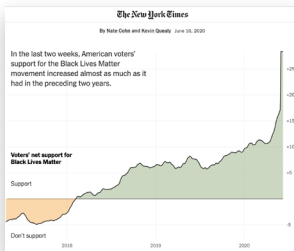


Image C & D: Both of these images show a shift in public opinion over time. Image C shows how in just the years 2017 to 2020, public opinion has shifted from disapproval of the Black Lives Matter movement to overwhelming support, with a recent spike (though net support officially turned in favor of BLM in 2018). Image D shows the dramatic reversal of public opinion on same-sex marriage from 2002 to 2018. The overwhelming support for marriage equality is still rather recent, though pervasive in mainstream American culture and among brands, as evidenced by corporate sponsorships of Pride in recent years. Thus, it is not unimaginable that corporate support of the Black Lives Matter movement will become hegemonic.

How Should Brands Act?

Increasingly, your colleagues, consumers, and staff are demanding both action & accountability from brands related to justice. For many within an organization, participating in, answering, and leading calls-to-action for change is the right thing to do – for society and for business.

Answering those calls-to-action may include: whether to issue statements, how to change internal culture, what commitments to make, whose voice to uplift, and what ways to support the cause & community, to name a few. But beginning this process may seem daunting.

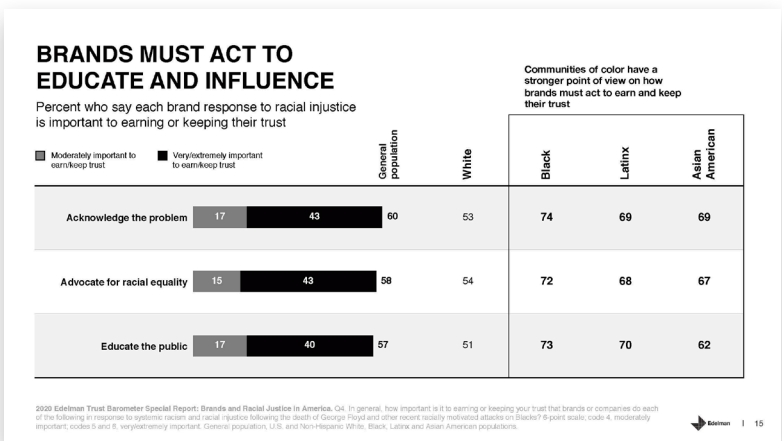
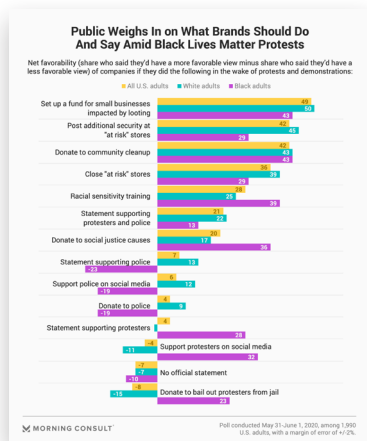
Every brand must start somewhere and – let’s be honest – we all have progress to make. Ogilvy included.

Here, we’ve outlined six practical steps to acting on your commitment to justice. Don’t be discouraged by where your brand is – just start. And whether you’re at step 1 or 4, now is the time to hit the accelerator.

- 1. *Educate yourself.*** Pay respect to the movement. Learn the issues. Understand how the “system” works.
- 2. *Listen.*** Whether or not you’re acting already, listen first and frequently.
- 3. *Uncover and acknowledge your truth.*** You have to know where you’re starting to get to where you’re going.
- 4. *Define your goals.*** You won’t hit the bullseye without a target at which to aim.
- 5. *Take actions and track them.*** Accept there is no perfect plan or playbook; consistency in effort is key.
- 6. *Check your creative intent.*** Ensure the messaging, messenger, and medium are ethically appropriate for your employees, customers, and beyond.

1. Educate Yourself

Justice in any arena means doing the right thing. Nowadays, Gen Z and Millennials expect brands to speak up, to act, and to educate. The magnitude and influence of a brand far outweighs most individual actors, and, as a result, brands have the ability to tip the scale of justice.



In particular, when it comes to issues of race, there is no single creative brief that can encapsulate all of the emotions – rage, shock, hope, fear, anxiety, optimism – felt by an audience. As a brand – marketing team, communications team, leadership team, sales team, and beyond – learning about racial inequity issues, unintended consequences, and ways to join calls-to-action for justice will be on-going. The commitment consumers expect is for brands to work towards achieving racial literacy. This concept is not often applied to brands. However, given the errors some brands have committed, education toward racial literacy is key.

Here are five mindsets to adopt to get justice right for brands:

- 1. *Know What You Don't Know:*** It's tempting to try to look “woke” or easy to assume everyone is starting with the same baseline knowledge and feelings, but it's more nuanced than that. Start with humility about uncertainties and assumptions. Start by accepting that some are more advanced on the subject than others; progress shouldn't be slowed as everyone attempts education parity. Companies can audit their baseline to identify gaps and goals. Knowledgeable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) or HR leaders can lead the assessment or reach out to outside DE&I resources to identify knowledge gaps.
- 2. *See the Bigger Picture:*** It's not a moment; it's a movement. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery are part of a wider context. Context is why the Black Lives Matter organization references the broader “movement to fight for Freedom, Liberation and Justice.” Brands should resist viewing any incident as isolated: instead, work to understand the driving individual, institutional, and cultural forces. Press pause: instead of being reactive to a marketplace trigger, ask what the broader context is and how it should be addressed. Outside stakeholders can provide additional perspective to day-to-day teams.
- 3. *Burst Your Bubble:*** Seek out different sources than you typically do. In the same way that brand teams set competitive news alerts, do so with current events for social media & traditional media monitoring. Empower your teams to take in and share out content from across the political, financial, and socio-cultural spectrum. Even – and especially – if it makes the team uncomfortable. Marketing/Brand/Communications as well as DE&I and HR leaders can recommend resources and facilitate discussions to help everyone burst their bubble. In terms of race and racism, pay attention to Black voices. Strive for vulnerability. Instead of being fragile, being open and non-assumptive is the way we can truly learn.

- 4. *It's Not About You:*** Don't act to make your brand look better or the management team feel better. Do it to help those in need of justice. As [Ijeoma Oluo](#), author of "So You Want to Talk About Race" says, "Don't try to make it about you. Don't try to make it about your pain and your journey, and keep your energies focused on where you can be of use to the struggle and to the movement that's happening right now." When your brand communicates, institute extra checks-and-balances to ensure that the content has the correct focus.
- 5. *Commit to Lifelong Learning:*** Justice isn't one-and-done. Accountability requires sustainability. Racism in particular is deep and wide and complex and changing. For brands, this means implementing institutional education – both evergreen and of the moment. Use the baseline you have from "Know What You Don't Know" above and conduct an additional survey of what employees want to know in the future. Instilling ownership in the process is one way of ensuring ongoing commitment to learning.

To help us all move to a place of better understanding, Ogilvy's Diversity & Inclusion team has compiled a list of books, articles, documentaries, podcasts, and more [here](#) that will be continually updated.

2. Listen

Whether or not you choose to act on justice, listening (in addition to education) is a key step to ensure decisions (marketing or otherwise) are more informed, more empathetic and more equitable. When it comes to race and racism, the next step after achieving foundational racial literacy is to get smart on current discourse.

Here are five tips to consider as you set up your listening efforts:

- 1. *Listen daily:*** As we've seen with the Black Lives Matter movement, conversation shifts significantly within a single day, so it's critical you stay up-to-date daily: Set your team up with alerts for news, reports, podcasts, an events watch, and social listening. Create a space (e.g., Slack, Basecamp) where the daily learnings can be shared and discussed to amplify learning. Assign a "social justice" lead on your team who can track & update others about breaking news; someone who can be empowered to be the voice of the community in meetings and creative delivery.
- 2. *Listen to the Black Lives Matter movement:*** Develop an evolving list of keywords and hashtags to stay up to date on key tensions, advancements, and frustrations from movement participants.

Example hashtags include: #blacklivesmatter #blm #justice #peacefulprotest #pulluporshutup #wematter #standforsomething #ourlivesmatter #saytheirnames #sayhername #nojusticenopeace #justiceforbreonnataylor #justiceforahmaud #justiceforgeorge #sayhisname #defundthepolice #justicefortonymcdade #silenceisviolence #acab #blacktranslivesmatter #misogynoir #racisminamerica #racism

3. *Listen to Black voices:* Develop an evolving list of social handles from key voices and activists within the Black Lives Matter movement to stay up to date on key tensions, advancements, and frustrations. Activate employee resource groups (ERGs) to advise and lead change. Many of the members are ready-to-go now; empower them to be change agents. Ensure external voices help create a fair & equitable agenda for which issues to prioritize and mobilize to solve first.

Example activists include (listed via their Instagram handles): @naacp @blklivesmatter @privtoprog @thegreatunlearn @pullupforchange @opalayo @chasinggarza @osopepatrisse @15percentpledge @rachelcargle @iamrachelricketts @irbamxx @antiracismctr @aclu @laylafsaad @benjaminokeefe @blairimani @mspackyetti @theconsciouskid @taranajaneen

4. *Listen to your competitors:* Monitor how your competition (direct and indirect – because culture isn't category-specific) is participating (or not participating) in the Black Lives Matter movement. Understand both their best practices and their lessons learned. If your competition is all speaking up, your silence will speak volumes. Conversely, if they have yet to speak or act, you have a golden opportunity to be the first and lead the charge. Resist the urge to copy others; each brand has a unique license and territory of credibility they should consider executing within. In essence, acknowledge that every brand cannot do what another brand does.

5. *Listen to your audience:* Monitor how your audience is specifically responding to, participating in, or supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. Are their behaviors shifting? How is their discourse similar or different than that of the Black Lives Matter movement and Black voices? Which voices and/or issues are they rallying behind the most?

As you put your listening foundation in place, go wide. Go wide in terms of your sources: consider using a variety of quantitative and qualitative inputs including social media data (organic and paid), search intent data (organic and paid), and ethnographic data. And go wide in terms of your ethos: ask your teams to listen hard especially to the things that make them uncomfortable – because that’s where the most transformational learning will come from. Consider using [this skill-based training guide](#) that will help you and your team move from empathetic & active listening to swift & meaningful action.

3. *Uncover & Acknowledge Your Truth*

At their core, justice and accountability can really only be built on the truth. Before you can turn your attention toward the outward forces affecting the issue of justice, familiarize yourself with your own (company/brand) history.

Start by uncovering your truth for three key reasons:

- 1. *Change cannot happen without confronting the truth:*** The word “reckoning” has been used widely across [culture](#) and [business](#) to describe this moment of racial unrest. For your brand to genuinely participate in that reckoning, it cannot do so effectively without owning your truth.
- 2. *The world is watching:*** In today’s hyper-connected world, a myriad of [brand trackers](#) and social media [watchdog accounts](#) pop up overnight in times of crisis and frenzy. Those who don’t address their problematic pasts receive public scoldings by consumers, former employees, or former business partners. We saw a similar phenomenon with the #MeToo movement when those who had been silenced for decades, by threats of legal action or retaliation, were finally empowered to speak and be heard. The times of sweeping bad behavior under the rug are firmly in the past. Similar to #MeToo, your organization should expect that change might be needed as a result of all the education, listening, and truth reconciliation. Not every employee is ready for the journey, and not every leader is equipped for the long-haul.
- 3. *Employees expect more:*** It’s not just consumers who buy based on values, it’s also employees who work based on values who will demand truth. They are your institutional conscience: across the world, employees have written open letters; they have taken employers to task for hypocrisy; they have staged demonstrations and protests. They want to be on the right side of history, and they want the companies they work for to be there with them.

Processing and acknowledging your truth

Doing anti-racism work means actively identifying and combating racism wherever you encounter it, including within yourself and your company. This may dredge up some hard-to-swallow truths about your operations or practices, but learning to process this discomfort is imperative in working towards justice. Direct that discomfort towards the “system” of the how the brand, company, industry operates rather than getting lost on assigning individual-level blame. Otherwise, the process stops there and there is no opportunity to remedy what you’ve discovered. Focus on the “system,” and your truth reconciliation will lead to more meaningful results.

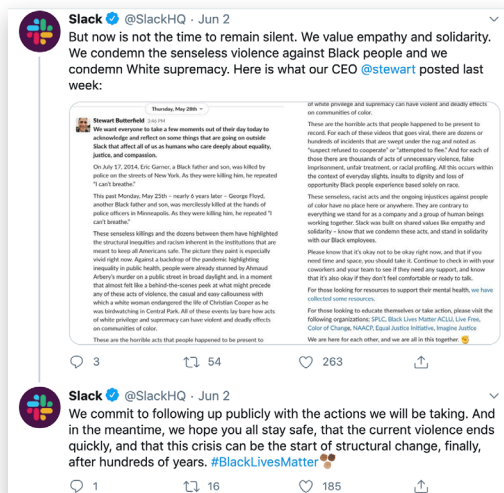
Acknowledge the past – good, bad or neutral – and make a plan to move forward. Instead of weathering the media storm (or waiting for it to pass), proactively address it head-on, and communicate with your employees first what your brand has done or is doing to remedy its practices. If it’s your brand’s first time engaging on the subject, say so. Own your narrative. The worst thing your brand can do is be silent on a subject of racial inequity that directly affects your employees & customer/client realities.

- You may find that your brand has been contributing to the cause all along or that there is a similar and related issue on which you’ve spoken up. Knowing your own history will provide legitimacy in any action you take or statement you make going forward. Now is not the time to get “credit” for any commitments you’ve made in the past (e.g., PR campaigns). Rather, now is the time to double-down and talk about new and/or expanded efforts.
- You may find that this is your brand’s first-time engaging with the issue at hand or that your truth is disappointing. Don’t be deterred. It’s never too late to start doing the right thing. To quote the wisdom of Anne Frank, “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

- In acknowledging your truth, you may find that the “system” of the brand or company has failed to produce Black voices in leadership. Non-Black leadership teams ought to be incredibly careful to not perpetuate stereotypes of being a “savior” to Black employees or the Black community. Recognizing that systemic racism has led to status quo practices that have prevented minorities from climbing into the leadership ranks, now is the time to correct those wrongs. Promote and empower Black employees ready for leadership through demonstrated knowledge, comfort, relationships, and empathy. The current moment requires a different type of leader – one with a high emotional intelligence rather than financial savvy alone.



Consumers are looking for brands to hold themselves accountable for past actions.



Slack released a statement detailing the specific internal processes and aspects of their organization they are addressing in an effort to ensure they are not just virtue signaling (publicly expressing sentiments intended to demonstrate one's good character or moral correctness) but actually matching their words with anti-racist actions.

Checking your foundation

To begin in this moment, start by checking:

- *On your Black employees:* Is there a way you can support them through this time? Ask them what “support” means rather than assuming that either a declaration of support (e.g., #BLM statement or black square in social media) or donation is what they feel will move the needle.
- *On your numbers:* Is the number of Black employees in your company reflective of the percentage of Black people in the U.S. population? Are they represented across departments or concentrated in specific ones? Are they represented in leadership and across levels? Are they equitably compensated?
- *On your environment:* Is the culture of your company welcoming to minority populations or does it require them to assimilate in order to succeed? Who writes the definition of “professionalism” for performance evaluations, for instance? Is there mentorship or sponsorship in place for underrepresented populations to ensure retention? Do all employees receive implicit biases and sensitivity training? Is everyone aware of what a microaggression is, and are they empowered to respond, intervene, and/or report when they witness one? Are managers reviewed by their direct reports at stages before an exit interview?

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, we wanted to publicly release a report of our corporate team's racial and ethnic makeup. We are a small but growing company and we must commit to increasing representation of the Black community on our team.

Today, we are committing to publicly release this report on June 30th of every year.

cocokind

Cocokind Corporate Team Report

Race + Ethnicity	Headcount	2019	2020
Asian	4	57%	7 39%
Latinx	0	0%	3 17%
White (non-Hispanic)	3	43%	6 33%
Black or African American	0	0%	1 6%
Native American	0	0%	1 6%
Other	0	0%	0 0%
Total	7		18

a) 2020 represents self-reported identities from corporate employees; 2019 headcount represents beginning of year metrics.

b) 17 or 95% of employees identified as female, 1 or 5% of employees identified as male.

We are committed to expanding our recruitment efforts, offering competitive pay, and providing flexible commuting policies to make job opportunities at cocokind more accessible.

cocokind

We recognize that we have work to do and will hold ourselves accountable.

Although we are still a small company, we are mighty (with a loud voice) and we hope to influence other companies throughout the country to make a similar commitment to lift up the Black community, increase representation, and increase transparency.

cocokind

On the opposite end of the spectrum, transparency does not always have to come in the form of self-flagellation. A paragon of this unsolicited honesty is Cocokind, a small, San Francisco-based skincare brand. It would be easy for them to say, “we’re still a small company, and that’s the reason our employee base is not appropriately representative.” Instead of absolving themselves of blame, they addressed the issue directly, releasing a report of their corporate team's racial and ethnic demographics. They also committed to updating this report annually to promote accountability in their commitment to racial equity and representation on their team.

4. Define Your Goals

Now, it's time to turn outward. But it's nearly impossible to reach a new destination without a map. Set yourself up for success by determining where you are going and planning your route to get there.

“American brands have rushed to show where they stand, but it's still uncertain what they intend to offer – what they can offer – beyond greater awareness of their existence and a vague sense of virtue.” ([“Brands have Nothing Real to Say about Racism,” The Atlantic, June 3, 2020](#)). Once you have uncovered your truth, it's time to act on it.

To ensure accountability and effective action, here are five steps you can take to ensure that your brand makes the progress toward justice that it intends:

- 1. *Be Clear:*** Corporate America loves a good vision and a plan; and, better yet, they love a lofty purpose or mission statement. Oftentimes, they don't apply this to social justice or in the fight against racism. Sometimes, a company's value-system doesn't even include something essential to creating a value-based relationship with customers: empathy. But it isn't sufficient to just “do something” or “do anything.” Listen externally and internally to determine which priorities to set that matter most to the Black communities in the office and in your customer base. Show solidarity? Create social change? Be a good corporate citizen? To test if your goals are clear enough, see if they lend themselves to [“plans.”](#)

2. ***Be Honest:*** Your team should be relentless in asking “Why?” Specifically, why are you striving for social change or allyship? What would success mean to your employees and external audiences? We encourage you to do things for the right reasons – morality & ethics. But we recognize you (being brands and businesses) also have financial and operational reasons. We encourage you to be upfront about them. Critical assessment of your motives goes a long way. Being a student of what other brands are doing and drawing on outside, objective perspectives here is especially important.
3. ***Be Measurable:*** There is still a great deal of work to be done on what metrics make sense, but it’s becoming clear – from private sector [CEOs](#) to the [public](#) sphere – that there is no accountability without measurement. One litmus test is that if you can’t think of a way to measure progress, it likely means you need to define your goals more rigorously. Once you’ve decided on clear KPIs, ensure that you put a timeframe against them – justice is faster achieved when your metrics are time-bound.
4. ***Be Action-Oriented:*** Your team should create action plans against each goal and pressure-test each goal, against “meaningful” for Black employees, the Black community, and world-at-large. For every “what” (goal) there should be both a “how” (action plan) you are going to achieve that objective and “why” (intentional, meaningful outcome) being measured.
5. ***Be Expansive:*** Don’t just check boxes. Think deeply and comprehensively about what needs to be achieved. To do this, consider the different audiences to whom your brand is accountable – for instance, your consumers, yes, but also your employees, and society at large:

Define Your Goals for Culture

Why are you really doing this?



Ben & Jerry's didn't just speak up in solidarity. It issued calls to President Trump and continues to provide education.

Define Your Goals with Employees

What do they want from you?



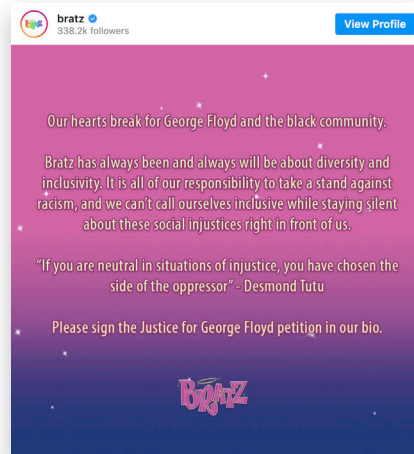
Writer Shenequa Golding's viral tweet to remember "black men and women in Zoom meetings" is a rallying cry for employer brands.

"Success" when it comes to combating racism is going to be a long, hard road. But without goals and meaningful outcomes, you won't know what success should even look like.

Define Your Goals for Consumers

What do you expect people to do?

How do you expect society to be impacted?



As noted by Teen Vogue, Bratz Dolls gave its fans an action: sign the Justice for George Floyd petition to lawmakers.

5. *Take Actions & Track Them*

There is a range of actions you can take, but as long as your actions contribute to the solution, **there is no “wrong” action. The only wrong action is inaction.**

There is no merit in making a statement without action accompanying it. Brands that make empty statements will be [exposed](#) if they're not living up to their promises internally and externally; worse, they will miss the opportunity to contribute to real change. As individuals are out of work, school, or stuck at home due to COVID-19, brands will encounter new headwinds. Audiences have more time than normal to use social media to find & blast brands that are being passive yet profiting from the Black community.

Action should be **tangible, specific, and measurable**. Think beyond the one-time donation to an organization doing work for your cause of choice. Donations are a great place to start, but if you're truly looking to make an impact, make donations sustainably. Set up a consistent, recurring donation or commit a sum of money over time. Recognize, though, that most problems are not so easily solved with money. Get creative with your solutions.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of actions your brand can take to address a social issue:

<i>Action</i>	<i>Brand Example</i>
Donate time, money, resources, gifts in-kind	Michael Jordan has committed \$100 million from the Jordan Brand to causes that further racial equity over the next ten years.
Donate media space to the cause	Nickelodeon went off the air for 8 minutes and 46 seconds in support of justice, equality, and human rights.
Invest in the community you intend to support	The Verizon Small Business recovery fund (link) provides grants to Black-owned businesses.
Use your platform to spread information about the issue; amplify marginalized voices	CMO of Endeavor, Bozoma St. John and author, Luvvie Ajayi Jones, started the #sharethemicnow movement using white women's platforms to amplify black women's voices. Companies under the Endeavor umbrella like IMG Models and New York Fashion Week used their platforms to promote the movement.
Show solidarity	In recognition of Blackout Tuesday and support of black musicians and creators, Apple Music blocked their "For You" and "Browse" sections with a message of solidarity and an option to "Listen Together."
Lobby elected officials for change	Ben & Jerry's published a manifesto about dismantling White Supremacy, including specific actions for government officials to take and legislation to instate.
Hold internal discussions, panels, and trainings for your employees; communicate efforts externally to attract talent who are committed to the same values	MAC Cosmetics released a detailed, specific, measurable list of actions they are taking internally to educate, diversify, and promote social justice throughout all levels of their workforce.
Make plans to address the issue in the future; commit to and communicate them now	Quaker Oats announced that, in recognition of the racist origins of Aunt Jemima, they will remove the image and name from the 130-year-old syrup brand.

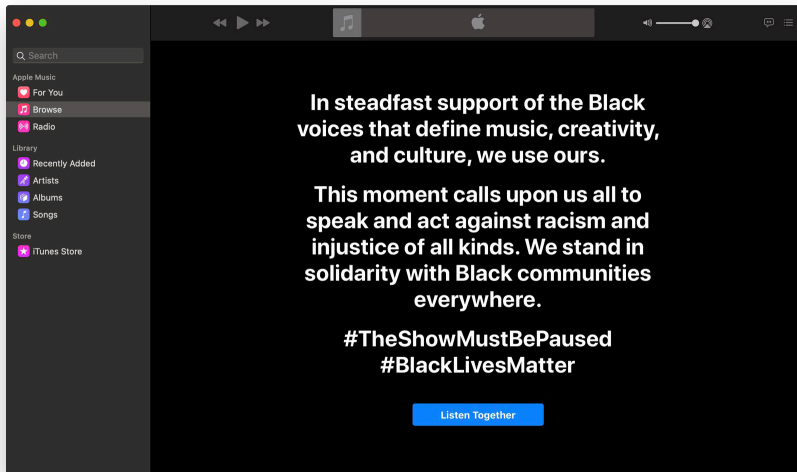


Image A: Apple Music's roadblock on Blackout Tuesday

First, we call upon President Trump, elected officials, and political parties to commit our nation to a formal process of healing and reconciliation. Instead of calling for the use of aggressive tactics on protestors, the President must take the first step by disavowing white supremacists and nationalist groups that overtly support him, and by not using his Twitter feed to promote and normalize their ideas and agendas. The world is watching America's response.

Second, we call upon the Congress to pass [H.R. 40](#), legislation that would create a commission to study the effects of slavery and discrimination from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies. We cannot move forward together as a nation until we begin to grapple with the sins of our past. Slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation were systems of legalized and monetized white supremacy for which generations of Black and Brown people paid an immeasurable price. That cost must be acknowledged and the privilege that accrued to some at the expense of others must be reckoned with and redressed.

Third, we support Floyd's family's call to create a national task force that would draft bipartisan legislation aimed at ending racial violence and increasing police accountability. We can't continue to fund a criminal justice system that perpetuates mass incarceration while at the same time threatens the lives of a whole segment of the population.

And finally, we call on the Department of Justice to reinvigorate its Civil Rights Division as a staunch defender of the rights of Black and Brown people. The DOJ must also reinstate policies rolled back under the Trump Administration, such as consent decrees to curb police abuses.

Unless and until white America is willing to collectively acknowledge its privilege, take responsibility for its past and the impact it has on the present, and commit to creating a future steeped in justice, the list of names that George Floyd has been added to will never end. We have to use this moment to accelerate our nation's long journey towards justice and a more perfect union.

Image B: Ben & Jerry's calls for policy change in their manifesto

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.

You have the right to a world that is peaceful.

You have the right to be treated with equality, regardless of the color of your skin.

You have the right to be protected from harm, injustice, and hatred.

You have the right to an education that prepares you to run the world.

You have the right to your opinions and feelings, even if others don't agree with them.

Image C: Nickelodeon gives media space, 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence, to commemorate George Floyd's life in support of "justice, equality, and human rights."

6. Check Your Creative Intent

We've all seen it. The tone-deaf commercial, the insensitive bandwagon social media post, or the inauthentic gesture. Consumers today are savvier than ever, and they have a platform to share their perspective. Social media has empowered the consumer watchdog and turned brand communications into a dialogue with consumers and individuals.

As Generation Z and Millennials gain more purchasing power and matters of justice continue to dominate public discourse, now is the time to ensure your creative intent, process and decision makers are thoroughly examined. In some cases, this may be a matter of overhaul, not tweaking.

Kai D. Wright, co-author of this paper and Ogilvy Global Consulting Partner, developed a [“culture-ethics” pressure test: be earnest, empower, and express empathy](#), which brings together a combination of methods to help leaders ethically amplify the “culture” of communities.

- Being earnest requires finding and defining the time commitment needed to move a community forward. Earnestness means staring at a creative idea and saying we can make this campaign, initiative, ad, or message stronger by aligning it to community expectations of sincerity.
- Delivering empowerment involves creating meaningful change for the community. As a tip, engage employee resource groups internally; they're often under-leveraged in giving the opinion of the communities they represent. Moreover, find voices of leaders in communities to amplify an invitation into the conversation early. When the idea is in creative development, do not just treat them as influencers and an extension of your media buys, but rather as valued voices in collaboration.

- Showing empathy requires developing community-specific solutions. Executives need to immerse in the “culture” of their consumers – food, music, art, fashion, and beyond. There’s no substitute for immersion – not focus groups, not man-on-the-street interviews, or any other fly-by tactic that checks the box of seeing a consumer in the wild.

Check your creative intent, process, and decision makers with this list of questions:

Check List

- Is your brief acting solely out of brand gain, or is there authentic commitment to racial justice?
- Are your external messages consistent with your internal communications, messages, and actions?
- Have all people involved educated themselves and achieved racial literacy (see step 2)?
- Is the team developing the work diverse and specifically inclusive of team members affected by racial injustice?
- Is the team approving the work diverse and specifically inclusive of team members affected by racial injustice?
- Have you thoroughly vetted the partners and people you're collaborating with to ensure their authentic commitment to racial justice?
- Have you found opportunities to lead by example and challenge industry norms built on bias? For example, ensuring you're paying your black and white influencer partners the same.
- Does the work provide real value to people affected by racial injustice?
- Does the work make assumptions about people affected by racial injustice?
- Are there check-points along the creative development process? Are you counseling your teams on how they can adapt to changing circumstances and information?

A Note on Ethos

When it comes to matters of justice, staying surface level in your marketing and communications simply isn't enough. Modern society & discourse demands more, your employees demand more, and your customers demand more. The guidance outlined in this paper provides practical steps you can take, but the ethos by which you do them is equally as important. Humanity recognizes humanity. Are you showing guts and pushing outside of your comfort zone? Are you being candid with employees and customers? Are you being humble as you listen and learn from others before asserting solutions? From your Instagram post, to your internal training initiatives, to your executive speeches, to the partnerships you establish – it all represents your DNA as a brand and is a part of a modern marketer's responsibility.

Ethos to live by:

Consistency Humility

Empathy Candor Courage

Thank You

*For any questions, please reach
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Ogilvy