

How to build more equitable workplaces? Start with the facts.

Black History Month is an ideal moment to make the case that companies need to design (or adapt) D&I initiatives to align with the unique experiences of Black professionals. The facts below show why. Share with your colleagues and communications teams, your ERGs or BRGs. Use them, as needed, in newsletters, emails, blog posts, or other communications to awaken all leaders, managers, and staff in your company and to galvanize action.

Black professionals are more likely than White professionals to be ambitious.

- 65% of Black professionals are very ambitious, compared to 53% of White professionals.
- 30% of Black professionals aspire to hold a top job, compared to 21% of White professionals.

Few Black professionals make it to the C-Suite.

- Black adults in America earn 10% of all college degrees and hold 8% of all professional positions. But, they hold only 3.2% of all executive/senior-level roles and less than 1% of all CEO positions at Fortune 500 Companies.

Black professionals are more likely to experience racial prejudice at work compared to any other racial or ethnic groups we surveyed.

- 58% of Black professionals have experienced racial prejudice at work, compared to 41% of Latinx professionals, 38% of Asian professionals, and 15% of White professionals.
- Regional differences are stark: 79% of Black professionals in the Midwest have experienced racial prejudice at work, compared to 66% in the West, 56% in the South, and 44% in the Northeast.
- Black professionals experience many microaggressions at higher rates than all other ethnic groups we analyzed.

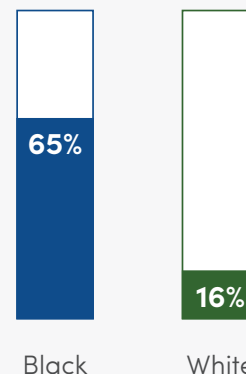
Black professionals lack access and support.

- Only 31% of full-time Black professionals have access to senior leaders at work, compared to 44% of their White counterparts.
- 19% of Black women have individuals in their networks who have advocated for their ideas and skills, compared to 35% of White women.

Few White professionals see what their Black colleagues are up against.

- 65% of Black professionals say that Black employees have to work harder in order to advance, but only 16% of their White counterparts agree with that statement.

Professionals who feel Black employees have to work harder to advance



Prejudice and microaggressions may drive high attrition.

- Black professionals are 30% more likely than their White counterparts to intend to leave their companies within two years.
- 38% of Black male professionals are planning to leave to start their own ventures.

White women are not seen as advocating for others.

- Only 12% of Black and White professionals alike believe White women use their power to advocate for other underrepresented groups at their companies.
- Black professionals are more likely than White professionals to see White women as the primary beneficiaries of diversity and inclusion efforts at their companies (Black: 29%, White: 13%).

More research you can use for Black History Month

External racial tensions spill into the workplace

Being able to talk about race at work can benefit your business, according to CTI findings.

- Race discrimination outside of the workplace affects the majority of minority employees: 78% of Black employees, 52% of Asian employees, and 50% of Latinx employees say they have experienced discrimination/bias outside of work and/or are fearful of it for themselves or their families, compared to 28% of White employees.
- Yet, while employees carry this pain to work, they cannot unburden themselves: more than two out of three are currently uncomfortable discussing race relations, and 29% feel it is never acceptable at their company to speak out about experiences of race-based bias.
- Black employees who say it is never acceptable to discuss race relations at work are more than twice as likely to regularly feel isolated and/or alienated at work.

Source: CTI's 2017 report [Easing Racial Tensions at Work](#)

What do Black women want most from work?

CTI researchers found out that Black women want the ability to flourish (91%), to excel (89%), to reach for meaning and purpose (85%), to earn well (81%), and to empower others and be empowered (73%).

- Black women are 2.8 times as likely as White women to aspire to a powerful position with a prestigious title.
- Despite high ambitions, 44% of Black women feel stalled in their careers (as compared to 30% of White women).
- When they have ideas they believe would drive value for their companies, Black women are 26% less likely than straight White men to have their ideas endorsed.
- Black women find it extremely difficult to win sponsorship: a mere 11% have sponsors.
- 72% of Black women believe that executive presence at their company is defined as conforming to traditionally White male standards. Additionally, 34% of Black women say they need to compromise their authenticity in order to conform to the executive presence standards at their company.

Source: CTI's 2015 report [Black Women Ready to Lead](#).

Unpublished data from CTI's 2012 study [Innovation, Diversity and Market Growth](#)

CTI's 2012 report [Vaulting the Color Bar: How Sponsorship Levers Multicultural Professionals into Leadership](#)

CTI's 2013 report [Cracking the Code: Executive Presence and Multicultural Professionals](#)