



“VOICES FROM THE FUTURE OF WORK”

Black Voices Insights Report

As we engage in a national conversation on systemic racism and how to make our society more inclusive, equitable, and just, we at Camber are engaging in some conversations of our own.

We are talking with -- and, most importantly, listening to -- diverse job seekers from *outside of the Outdoor Recreation Economy* about what factors are vital in creating inclusive, equitable workplaces that will attract and retain diverse talent in the Outdoor Recreation Economy. The Outdoor Recreation Economy is an \$887 billion industry that accounts for 7.6 million jobs, in which Black people are significantly underrepresented.

This report presents insights captured from “Voices from the Future of Work” a series of conversations hosted by Camber to explore Black job seekers’ perspectives on what makes a workplace inclusive. Our goals were to:

1. Build understanding of the needs of diverse talent of all ages, experiences, and skill sets
2. Provide Camber Partners with insights and perspectives to inform recruiting, hiring, onboarding, recruitment, and advancement strategies
3. Equip Camber Partners with insights to strengthen overall DEI strategies and practices for creating inclusive workplaces.

We sought to achieve these goals by engaging diverse talent in Conversation, providing Context for the insights we heard, and issuing a Call to Action.



The Conversation

To better understand the needs of Black talent, we engaged in a conversation with Black job seekers, workforce development experts, and Black professional organization leaders of all ages, experiences, and skill sets. We explored their views on recruitment, hiring, retention, discrimination, DEI strategies, and workplace practices. We grouped the insights into two categories:

- Inclusive Leadership and Culture
- Equitable Systems



The Context

To provide further context for our findings, we placed the insights in context by presenting quantitative data on the experiences of diverse talent in the workplace from several research sources, including Pew Research, Gallup, McKinsey, and others.



The Call to Action

This report presents a call to action to be shared with CEOs, Senior Executives and industry leaders actively striving to create more workplaces that attract and retain a diversity of talent. Voices from the Future of Work will include listening sessions focused on the following communities: Black; Brown/Latinx; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; Native/Indigenous; LGBTQ+; People with Disabilities and others underrepresented in workplaces.

Equitable Systems: Black Representation in Leadership



The Conversation

- “Unfortunately, because Blacks haven’t always had a seat at the leadership table, it has caused mistrust of systems that have not historically represented us.”
- “Leadership has a lot of responsibility... not just leading a company or department, but rather it can make or break an employee’s faith in their company.



The Context

According to the latest online survey for the Gallup Center on Black Voices, representation of Blacks in leadership is a powerful force in shaping Black employee perceptions of their work experiences. However, Black workers (7.8%) are far less likely than white workers (83.6%) to hold management positions in the U.S. workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics.) And among the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, just 1% (five out of 500) are Black.

As shown below, it Black representation in leadership is vital because Black workers who do see Black leadership at work have much more positive attitudes about their workplaces and jobs than Black workers who do not see Black leaders at their organizations.”

<i>% Who strongly agree with each statement</i>	Black workers in workplaces WITH Black leadership	Black workers in workplaces WITHOUT Black leadership
Having confidence their employer will ensure they are treated right	62%	4%
Being confident in their company's ethics and integrity	61%	5%
Being treated with respect	58%	6%
Feeling comfortable being themselves at work	56%	7%

Findings are from the latest online survey for the Gallup Center on Black Voices conducted Nov. 6-Dec 1, 2020. More than 8,000 respondents were surveyed, including more than 3,500 White workers, more than 2,000 Black workers and more than 2,000 Hispanic workers.



The Call to Action

Organizations that prioritize diverse representation in leadership positions can create an environment that attracts and retains Black talent. Equitable DEI-focused systems such as effective mentorship and sponsorship programs, equitable compensation, a fair performance evaluation system, and inclusive workplace practices demonstrate commitment to achieving leadership diversity. To maintain the credibility of these systems, organizations must ensure not only that these systems are implemented, but also that they yield tangible gains in diverse representation.

Equitable Systems: DEI-Focused Programs & Policies



The Conversation

- "It is super important that when you are looking for employment, you discover and research whether or not the company has some structure in place that relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion, or racial justice. And you can look for things like Employee Resource Groups, and whether they are focused on DEI at all.
- "There needs to be a no-tolerance policy [against racism and discrimination.]Accountability needs to be taken in order for us to feel comfortable enough for us to come to you if we have a situation and to know that this isn't just talk, but something you're going to act upon.



The Context

Gallup research shows that 1 in 4 Black employees have experienced discrimination based on their race. The history and pattern of racial discrimination have undermined Black employee trust in their workplaces. According to McKinsey's February 2021 study, *Race in the Workplace: The Black Experience in the U.S. Private Sector*, "A trust deficit reflects Black employee perceptions of their workplace as less fair, accepting, and authentic."

For example, Black employees are **less likely than white employees in the same company to perceive that their workplaces are fair and supportive**. Blacks are:

- 41 percent less likely to view promotions as fair
- 39 percent less likely to believe their company's DE&I programs are effective



The Call to Action

- Building trust is a strategic imperative for organizations. Why? According to the Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report, a high level of employer-employee trust yields benefits in the form of "a greater ability to compete for talent in the marketplace; lower employee turnover; and increased external performance.

Employees who trust their employers are far more likely to:

Advocate on behalf of their employer	78%
Be engaged and live the organization's values	71%
Be strongly committed to their jobs and the customers they serve	83%

Comments from Black job seekers reflect a need to bolster trust by:

- Establishing DEI programs and policies that demonstrate commitment to addressing the racism and discrimination faced by Black employees.
- Clearly communicating the existence of these programs in the recruitment process
- Actively encouraging employee engagement in the DEI program

Equitable Systems: Training & Professional Development



The Conversation

- "In thinking about career growth and opportunity to get to a different level or stage, then the employer should help you with professional development to get you there.
- "When it comes to an inclusive and supportive workplace, I look for training and development opportunities."



The Context

Black employees are keenly aware that training and professional development are vital to their ability to overcome the following significant barriers to career advancement:

- Black employees are overrepresented in frontline jobs, which have higher turnover, lower pay, and are at higher risk of elimination due to automation.
- Further, Black employees face a "broken rung," or the breakdown in career progression that Blacks, Indigenous/Native, Brown/Latinx, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, LGBTQ+, People with Disabilities and others underrepresented in workplaces face in moving from entry-level positions to managerial positions on the corporate ladder.
- According to the [McKinsey study](#), Black employees comprise 19 percent of frontline hourly workers but only 7% at the managerial level. Across the senior manager, VP, and SVP levels, Black representation holds steady at 4-5%, and declines to a mere 1% of CEOs in the Fortune 500.



The Call to Action

Develop training and professional development programs aimed at upskilling, hiring, retaining and advancing black employees along the career continuum. Reward and highlight leaders that demonstrate a commitment to training, development, and ongoing support of Black employees.

Leadership & Culture: Mission, Vision, and Values



The Conversation

- “Company vision and values matter most”
- “Mission and meaning ...matter more than money.”
- “If you can go through that mission statement and pick it apart, and your views align with their views, then that says a lot. So you respect what they stand for.”



The Context

Mission matters to Black employees who see the importance of mission, vision, and values in shaping workplaces that are truly inclusive and equitable. According to the [Harvard Business Review's “Advancing Black Leaders” series](#), “D&I [Diversity & Inclusion] needs to be an ethos that permeates the entire organization, championed not just by the HR department but by everyone, and especially managers, so that its importance is clear.”

And increasingly, mission matters to all employees, especially the next generation of talent, Millennials and Generation Z. A [September 2020 Glassdoor survey](#) found 3 in 4 job seekers and employees report that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers. According to a [May 2020 Pew Research study](#), fully two-thirds of Millennials, who comprise the largest and most diverse segment of the workforce, say that Blacks are treated less fairly than whites in this country. Members of Generation Z are equally likely to agree.



The Call to Action

Make a DEI commitment an integral part of mission, vision, and values. Embed DEI principles into business and organizational strategy. Articulate the role of DEI in all aspects of the diverse talent pipeline: recruiting, hiring, onboarding, retention, and advancement. Incorporate DEI metrics into the performance measurement of leadership.

Leadership & Culture: Mentoring & Sponsorship



The Conversation

- “Mentorship programs help create opportunities for advancement.”
- “Providing an employee with a mentor is really what helps build a career path.”



The Context

[Research](#) shows that “mentoring programs dramatically improved promotion and retention rates for minorities and women—by 15% to 38%, respectively, as compared with non-mentored employees. Yet according to [McKinsey](#), Black employees lack the sponsorship and allyship to help them rise to the management level. In fact, “more than 67% of Black employees and 63% of white employees report they do not have a sponsor, despite 87

percent of our participating companies reporting that they have sponsorship programs in place.”



The Call to Action

Establish the robust mentoring and sponsorship programs that are critically important to Black recruitment, retention, and advancement. Invest in the development of Black employees. Coach them. Provide actionable feedback through both formal and informal means. Advocate for Black employee access to opportunities that provide experience and exposure.

Leadership & Culture: Inclusive Leadership Style



The Conversation

- “It’s important to be able to go into an office and be true to yourself.”
- “For me, it’s transparency.... I want to know how I can be better and do better, as well as if I’m doing a great job. It’s made all the difference in the world in my job performance, in how I feel about the company I work for, and it made me more loyal to [my manager.]”



The Context

- Black employees crave the opportunity to work with leaders who lead with transparency and honesty, allowing Black employees to “be true to themselves” in a society in which they face myriad forms of racism and discrimination. However, according to the [Harvard Business Review](#), “many managers are ill-equipped to lead and connect with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) employees. ...Until white leaders become skilled at *bridging* (connecting with people different from them) ...BIPOC employees will not experience workplace inclusion.”

Managers’ inability to connect with people different from them is particularly detrimental to Black employees’ experiences in the workplace because for Black people, their race is central to their identity:

“About three-quarters of Black adults say that being Black is extremely (52%) or very (22%) important to how they think about themselves. ...By comparison, about six-in-ten Hispanic (59%) and 56% of Asian adults say being Hispanic or Asian, respectively, is extremely or very important to their identity. Only 15% of white adults see race as a central piece of their identity.” ([2019 Pew Research Center Survey](#).)

Inclusive leadership styles allow Black employees to embrace their Black identity in the workplace; be more fully themselves; and contribute the innovative ideas, varied perspectives, and creative problem-solving approaches that make “truly diverse organizations 87% more likely to make better decisions.” ([Korn Ferry Research](#))



The Call to Action

Leading global organizational consulting firm Korn Ferry conducted [fieldwork and analysis of over 3 million leadership assessments](#), identifying the disciplines and traits that define an inclusive leader. Their research

showed that inclusive leaders “interact with the diversity around them, build interpersonal trust, take the views of others into account, and are adaptive, which increases their effectiveness and the impact they have on individuals, teams, and the organization as a whole.” However, the research showed that “Skilled inclusive leaders are rare. In fact, ...only 5% of leaders globally can be defined as inclusive. The good news is that inclusive leadership can be assessed, coached and developed.”

Train leaders in strategies for building inclusive cultures. Equip leaders with the tools and resources to tackle challenging race-related topics. Build structures and systems that enable leaders to participate in activities that build an awareness and understanding of a diversity of cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Make inclusive leadership metrics and incentives an integral part of both your organization-wide professional development and performance appraisal processes. As leaders seek to develop leadership styles that embrace Black employees, they will build cultural competency that will enable them to create more inclusive workplaces for all.

Conclusion

According to the [Society for Human Resources Management](#), citing a 2019 study by Coqual (formerly the Center for Talent Innovation), “Black professionals may be represented in corporate offices, but they're not being welcomed and included. As a result, companies are at risk of losing them, along with their significant talents and valuable perspective that companies need to help innovate and serve an increasingly diverse customer base.”

Black job seekers are lifting their voices in a clarion call for inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplaces that will allow them to actualize their full potential within the Outdoor Recreation Economy, an industry that is ripe with opportunity for them. We too have an opportunity... to heed the calls to action from Black Voices.