

DE&I in Corporate America Topline Summary
Prepared for: The Black Economic Alliance Foundation
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General Sentiment Regarding DE&I in Corporate America

Overall, more Americans support businesses taking measures to ensure companies reflect the diversity of the American population than oppose. High percentages of Americans also agree that corporate America should reflect both the general and racial diversity of the American population. Additionally, nearly all employed Americans report that their employers are taking steps to ensure diversity among their employees and rate their efforts as “good” or “excellent”.

- Overall, US adults support businesses taking active steps to make sure companies reflect the diversity of the American population (78% support vs. 22% oppose).
 - Black Americans are significantly more likely to say they support this compared to Hispanic and white Americans (88% vs. 78% Hispanic, 75% white).
 - Additionally, younger Americans are significantly more likely to say they support these efforts compared to older (Support: 83% Gen Z, 83% Millennials vs. 74% Boomers+).
- Taking it a step further, similar numbers agree that corporate America should reflect the diversity of the American population (81% agree vs. 19% disagree).
 - Black Americans, again, are significantly more likely to agree with this statement compared to both Hispanic and white Americans (89% vs. 77% Hispanic, 81% white).
 - Sentiment across generations is similar, with roughly 4 in 5 in each group agreeing with this statement.
- More than three quarters of Americans agree that the racial diversity of the country should also be reflected in corporate America (78% agree vs. 22% disagree).
 - While a majority of each racial/ethnic group agree with this statement, Black (90%) Americans are significantly more likely to agree than Hispanic (81%) and white (75%) Americans.
 - Agreement is high across generations, but Gen Z (84%) and Millennials (82%) are significantly more likely to agree compared to Gen X (76%) and Boomers (75%).
- Complementing Americans’ high support of businesses taking steps to ensure diversity in corporate America, employed Americans also rate their company’s efforts around ensuring diversity well.
 - Nearly all (91%) of employed Americans say their company is doing something to ensure diversity among employees. Among them, 7 in 10 (72%) rate their company’s efforts as “good” or “excellent”, while just 1 in 5 (22%) say it’s “fair” and a small percentage (6%) gave a “poor” or “terrible” rating.
 - “Excellent” or “good” ratings are similar across racial/ethnic groups with white Americans most likely to give this rating (77% white, 72% Black, 69% Hispanic).
 - Interestingly, the oldest generation of Americans is significantly more likely to give their company’s efforts an “excellent” or “good” rating than any younger generation (83% Boomers+ vs. 67% Gen Z, 72% Millennials, 70% Gen X). These lower ratings, especially among the youngest of the American workforce, could indicate that the expectations surrounding DE&I in the workplace are higher for these groups.

Impacts of DE&I Practices in Corporate America

Americans believe that promoting racial diversity among employees would have a positive impact on various aspects of a business, including employee performance, profitability, and the ability to reach and understand a broader set of customers. Black Americans are significantly more likely to think there would be a positive impact compared to at least one other racial/ethnic group for a majority of these aspects. Though the percentages are relatively high and similar across generations, Gen Z Americans often report

the lowest percentage for positive impact compared to their older counterparts – speaking to their generation’s need for companies to do more in this space.

- When thinking about the impacts of promoting racial diversity in a business’ workforce to reflect the American population, Americans overwhelmingly agree that there would be positive impacts on the following:
 - The ability to understand a broader set of customers (87% say there would be a positive impact)
 - The ability to reach a broader set of customers (86%)
 - The ability to innovate (84%)
 - How well an employee does their job (82%)
 - Talent recruitment/hiring (80%)
 - Compliance and managing legal risk (80%)
 - Profitability or making money (79%)
 - Employee retention (79%)
- Across racial/ethnic groups, nearly three quarters or more report there would be a positive impact on any of these aspects if racial diversity was promoted by a business. However, Black Americans are significantly more likely to report the positive impact on the following:
 - The ability to reach a broader set of customers (88% vs. 79% Hispanic)
 - The ability to innovate (87% vs. 77% Hispanic)
 - Talent recruitment/hiring (86% vs. 79% white)
 - Compliance and managing legal risk (86% vs. 77% Hispanic)
 - Profitability or making money (87% vs. 73% Hispanic, 79% white)
- While percentages for positive impact are similar across generation, each cohort is significantly more likely to say there would be a positive impact on at least one aspect of a business compared to Gen Z Americans.
 - Millennials: the ability to innovate (86% vs. 79% Gen Z)
 - Gen X: the ability to reach a broader set of customers (87% vs. 79% Gen Z)
 - Boomers+: the ability to reach a broader set of customers (88% vs. 79% Gen Z) and the ability to understand a broader set of customers (89% vs. 83% Gen Z)

Additional Context Setting

Americans overestimate the representation of Black CEOs across America’s 500 largest companies. Young Americans are likely to have higher estimates of representation, potentially signaling that they are more hopeful that DE&I efforts are making an impact across corporate America. Additionally, most Americans believe the actual number of Black CEOs across the 500 largest companies is not enough.

- Americans are highly misinformed regarding what percentage of America’s 500 largest companies have Black CEOs. On average, Americans think 19% of the 500 largest companies have a Black CEO.
 - Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) answered between 0%-5%, with just over 1 in 10 (14%) answering with 1% or 2%. A quarter (24%) answered between 6%-19%, and nearly 4 in 10 (37%) guessed 20% or more.
 - The average for Black Americans (24%) is also significantly higher than both Hispanic (19%) and white (18%), again with averages for all being much higher than the actual ~2%.
 - The average answer for young Americans is significantly higher than older, however all averages are higher than actuality (23% Gen Z, 23% Millennials vs. 17% Gen X, 14% Boomers+). The higher numbers among younger Americans points to the possibility that they may be more optimistic about the impacts of current DE&I efforts.
- When provided with the actual representation of Black CEOs across America’s largest 500 companies, a majority (71%) said this number was not enough.

- All racial/ethnic groups similarly agree that ~2% is not enough (76% Black, 75% Hispanic, 69% white).
- Interestingly, the oldest and youngest Americans are more likely to say this representation is not enough compared to those in the middle (76% Boomers+, 74% Gen Z vs. 67% Millennials and 69% Gen X), with Boomers+ being significantly more likely than both Millennials and Gen X.

Verbatims

Respondents were asked how they would describe efforts that promote DE&I in corporate America to a friend. Below are a few examples of responses.

- *“When corporate America promotes diversity, equity and inclusion in their hiring practices, everyone wins. They can reach a broader number of people with their ads and thus increase their sales and productivity.”* Age 21 (Gen Z), Male, Independent
- *“I would say ESG is a scam and it’s to the detriment of this country and its people. Only woke people care about diversity, most people do not.”* Age 39 (Millennial), Female, Independent
- *“A great resource for many different types of people across America to enter new levels of the workforce and really showcase their skills that might otherwise be overlooked and underappreciated”* Age 70 (Boomer+), Male, Republican
- *“Attempting to attract a wider pool of employees by focusing on recruitment of minority groups, making sure key posts are held by people that reflect America. Less old white men.”* Age 39 (Millennial), Male, Democrat

Brief Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of The Black Economic Alliance Foundation from August 8-9, 2023, among 2025 adults ages 18 and older. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 2.7 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact info@blackeconomicalliance.org.

Full Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States between August 8-9, 2023, among 2,025 adults (aged 18 and over) by The Harris Poll on behalf of The Black Economic Alliance Foundation via its Harris On Demand omnibus product.

Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, [employment], and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within \pm 2.7 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.