

FOR ANTI-RACISM, THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A BETTER BRAND

An Ipsos round-table about how to bring systemic action and an anti-racist approach to business.

An Ipsos POV in Diversity & Inclusion

By:
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GAME CHANGERS





KEY FINDINGS

- Racism is systemic, so an anti-racist approach in business must also be systemic.
- Data shows that Black, Hispanic, and Asian consumers have different expectations and needs than white consumers across all areas of business.
- The Better Brands Model helps companies ask the right questions to work towards this structural and comprehensive approach to anti-racism.

Meet the Panelists

Jason McGrath, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs

Victoria Guyatt, Vice President, Ethnography

Amber Jawaid, Senior Vice President, Online Communities

Mo Zhou, Chief Advisor Social Analytics and Strategy, SIA

Philip Ryan, Partner, Strategy3

Engaging every part of a company is essential to comprehensive anti-racist action. Below is an edited conversation with five Ipsos experts from the Ethnography, Social Intelligence and Analytics, Online Communities, Reputation and Strategy teams. They talk through what consumers are looking for when evaluating a brand's anti-racism efforts and the best data-driven ways for companies to approach meaningful anti-racist work.

The experts offer the [Better Brands Model](#) as a framework for thinking through and understanding some of the toughest questions companies face on these matters. Read below to learn more.

Sarah Feldman, Data Journalist

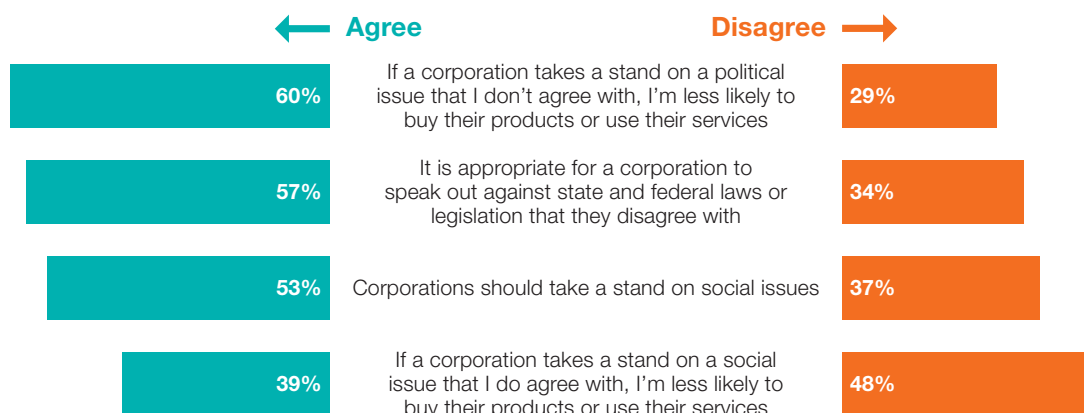
When consumers are considering products or brands, how are they thinking about racism and a companies' work in that space?

Jason McGrath, SVP, Public Affairs

There is an expectation that corporations take a stand on social issues. Some of the latest data from the [Ipsos Consumer Tracker](#) shows about 53% of Americans generally agree companies should do this. Taking it a step further, these findings also show that consumers are willing to reward companies that take a stand (as long as they agree with that stand) and they're willing to punish companies they disagree with.

Consumers are less likely to buy products from companies they don't agree with

To what extent do you [agree or disagree] with the following?



Source: Ipsos Consumer COVID tracker survey of 1,115 Americans, conducted April 13–14, 2021

When it comes to anti-racism, the majority of respondents say that they're more likely to purchase something from a company that's taking a public stand against racism.

[The data](#) shows it's generally not enough to just simply make a statement in support of racial justice or donate funds to other organizations. It's about committing to equality in hiring and pay within the company; it's about investing in communities where you operate and amongst those who are underserved. These expectations are even higher among minority audiences than among white respondents.

Sarah Feldman, Data Journalist

How do different groups approach anti-racism differently?

Victoria Guyatt, VP, Ethnography

I have a slightly different perspective from my healthcare background. A lot of the work that I'm doing is not necessarily seeing if folks want to buy a particular product. Instead, it's looking at pharma brands and seeing if people feel these companies understand the unique needs of their community.

This is the work that we've done with Black, African American, and Latina women. One of the things that these communities are looking for is: Am I represented positively? Is it authentic?

We saw that in recent work we did with women in the oncology space. There was one example that really stood out. There was a potential advert with a birthday party scene; mom had made it to the birthday party because she had survived her cancer. But, in the advert, there were only three people at the birthday party. The participants were astounded because, in the Hispanic/Latino community, you would never have that in real life, you know? Especially if you survived cancer! Where are the aunts and grandparents? [Details like that make a difference.](#)

Another example: Black women responded well to an advert portraying Black women with natural hair out because they saw themselves reflected. It's rare to see Black women with natural hair in advertising, and it felt authentic.





But how do we find those details? I'm not a Black woman who lives in the U.S., so I'm not going to identify the details you need. The experts on these experiences need to be involved for better representation.

**Amber Jawaid,
SVP, Online Communities**

I think that is such a key point that you made, Victoria. We did some work with a technology company looking at social campaigns. White people actually found this campaign ostracizing and Black people found it resonated very well with them. Would this ad have run two years ago? Maybe not. But we're in a space today where it needs to be addressed.

Sarah Feldman, Data Journalist

It feels like all this change happened at once. Is that actually true? I'd love to hear how your research has evolved on these topics.

Victoria Guyatt, VP, Ethnography

I have never had the questions that clients are coming to us with now. They've been the best projects we've worked on.

I feel George Floyd was a real turning point. Before, there was a bit of work with gender and with the LGBTQ+ communities, but I think the anti-racism work over the last year or so has seen a tremendous increase.

**Amber Jawaid,
SVP, Online Communities**

Even for long-term community projects that have multiple objectives, in the last year, anti-racism was front and center. It's much more top of mind for brands today.

If you were to talk to an ethnic minority person five years ago, it was top of mind for them too. How we can talk about it today is what's different, and this change in sentiment creates the ability for people to have hope. [That sentiment that we've been tracking](#) is what's been incredible to see.

Mo Zhou, Chief Advisor, Social Analytics & Strategy, SIA

Before, when we talked about racism, we always talked about intent. But when we shift our perspective from individuals to systems, we are shifting that focus from intent to outcomes.

From a brand perspective, we don't just think about creating messages or making donations because we want to fight racism, but rather we examine the system to understand the consequences and outcomes of the business models we create.

What has surfaced is a series of events that put the spotlight onto these conversations.

That's why I love the line of work in Social Intelligence. I view it as the power of community storytelling. Before the age of social media, a lot of these stories were lost, but today through social media, you can see that people are telling their stories in their voices. Any person's story can change the way we think and shift how we approach things.



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Sarah Feldman, Data Journalist

We've been jumping around a lot between consumers and brands and how one feels about the other. Philip, I know you do a lot of work to synthesize these problems and questions. Can you help us think through these issues for consumers and brands?

Philip Ryan, Partner, Strategy3

The model we use to break down these issues is called [the Better Brands Model](#).

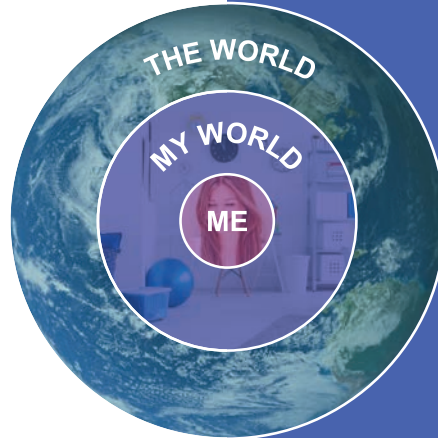
It was first created to try and reconcile all the reputational stuff that Jason was talking about, which is centered in a corporate social responsibility or a public affairs team, with the work that comes separately out of a brand, a product or services team. Working disjointedly, each team had its own brand-building models.

The Better Brand Model is about bringing these worlds together by asking three very simple questions to think about what consumers care about.



What the Better Brands Model looks like

Our Ipsos “Better Brands Model” provides a lens to think about what people care about on three levels



HOW BETTER IS IT FOR THE WORLD?

HOW BETTER IS IT FOR MY WORLD?

HOW BETTER IS IT FOR ME?

The first question is, how is what I’m doing going to be better for me as the consumer? The second question: How is this making my world better, which involves questions about how actions impact people’s community or family? Then, ultimately, the last question is, how is this making the world better? And not necessarily perfect, but again, better than it would have been had I not introduced this product, brand effort, or initiative into my life.

This is very interesting when it ties to anti-racism work. You want to continuously try and combat racism. You’re just not going to do that overnight, so you have to adopt this continuous, systemic mindset.

Sarah Feldman, Data Journalist

Can you give us an example of how to think through the application of this model?

Philip Ryan, Partner, Strategy3

When applying the model to different communities, your approach is different. We did some work with [Bank of America and Merrill Lynch](#), where we looked at affluent Americans who were Black/African American, LGBTQ+, or Hispanic/Latino.

We approached this by asking, what are these communities’ different needs? How can our clients better serve people with different life goals, life moments, and educational experiences?

Once you answer these questions, you also must understand that there are competing ways people think about these issues, which influence the goals they have as a consumer. For example, from Merrill, if you look at people who are members of the

Hispanic/Latino community, they are four times as likely to say that their most important financial goal is to assist or support aging parents. One in five in the Hispanic/Latino community also say leaving an inheritance to their family is very important, which over indexes versus other communities. There are things in there that we need to understand to better serve people within a specific world or group.

Sarah Feldman, Data Journalist

Fascinating. Any concluding thoughts?

Mo Zhou, Chief Advisor, Social Analytics & Strategy, SIA

The story of racism cannot be told by one person. It touches so many people, so it needs to be told collectively from different perspectives to surface those voices. What has changed is how those stories are told and shared and the spotlight on them because of the series of triggering events talked about above.

We talked about having the power of community storytelling now, and this is directly linked back to how we innovate through the Better Brands Model. It allows us to understand the right questions to ask consumers about how we can do better. There are activists, super-users, and grassroots innovators who can tell you what you, as a brand, can do to make the changes or innovate your business models, products, services, and practices to address racism as a system. By doing this, you can be part of this anti-racism movement to meaningfully shift racial equality and equity.

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About Ipsos

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands, and society. We deliver information and analysis that makes our complex world easier and faster to navigate and inspires our clients to make smarter decisions. With a strong presence in 90 countries, Ipsos employs more than 18,000 people and conducts research programs in more than 100 countries. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is controlled and managed by research professionals.