Edelman Trust Barometer 2021

Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America



Urgency, but limited progress.

Despite racism remaining an urgent concern for the majority of Americans, nearly 1 in 3 respondents see America making progress in addressing racism over the last year. 18% think things have actually gotten worse.



Nearly half believe business has done little.

46% of Americans, and over half of Black, Latinx, and AAPI Americans agree with the statement that "with few exceptions, the business community has done very little in the way of concrete actions to address systemic racism in our country."



Progress from corporations; the onus is now on brands.

Last year, brands outperformed corporations on getting their own house in order, educating and influencing, and creating change. This year, corporations outperformed brands – potentially due to progress made within the workplace.



For brands, addressing racism is a business imperative.

42% of Americans, and over half of Black and Latinx consumers, have started or stopped using a new brand in the past year because of the way they responded to the protests against systemic racism and calls for racial justice.



Talk must be followed by action.

53% agree that brands and companies that issue a statement in support of racial equality need to follow it up with concrete action to avoid being seen as exploitative or as opportunists.



All sectors are falling short.

While there are some signs of progress, no sector is seen as doing well in addressing racism. 44% of Americans believe the sports sector has performed well – the highest of any sector – followed by healthcare (42%) and food & beverage (39%).



Less than 1 in 4 trust CEOs on racism.

Just 22% of American employees trust their CEOs to tell the truth about racism, diversity, equity & inclusion within their organization. This is substantially lower for Black employees at 14%.



79% of respondents expect CEOs to act.

Some top examples of these actions include instituting a policy of zero tolerance of racism within their organization, ensuring that the workforce at all levels is racially representative of the country, and establishing programs within the workplace to foster the growth and career development of Black, Latinx/Hispanic, and API employees.

