



# BLACK LIVES MATTER:

How brands can become committed allies beyond the news cycle

MEDIAHUB

scout

# BACKGROUND

The killing of George Floyd, and many before him, as a result of police brutality has brought about a national conversation on racial injustice and systemic racism. It has catapulted the Black Lives Matter movement into a ubiquitous standing, ever-present in our communities, screens, devices, and social feeds. This movement has forced brands to think about and question how to respond, behave, and commit to being an ally.

Brands have the opportunity to engage in activism, far beyond a hashtag, in order to become a true ally to this movement. This means fighting for change online and offline, with continued advocacy that grows stronger even after media attention has died down, focusing on activism that goes far beyond virtue-signaling and instead amplifies the voices of the movement to create real change.

Mediahub took a consumer-first approach in understanding the most effective ways for brands to grow their allyship, using proprietary Scout research, industry insights, and social listening to understand what action consumers are calling for. The following pages will explore how brands can commit to making lasting changes and continue to strive for a more just society.

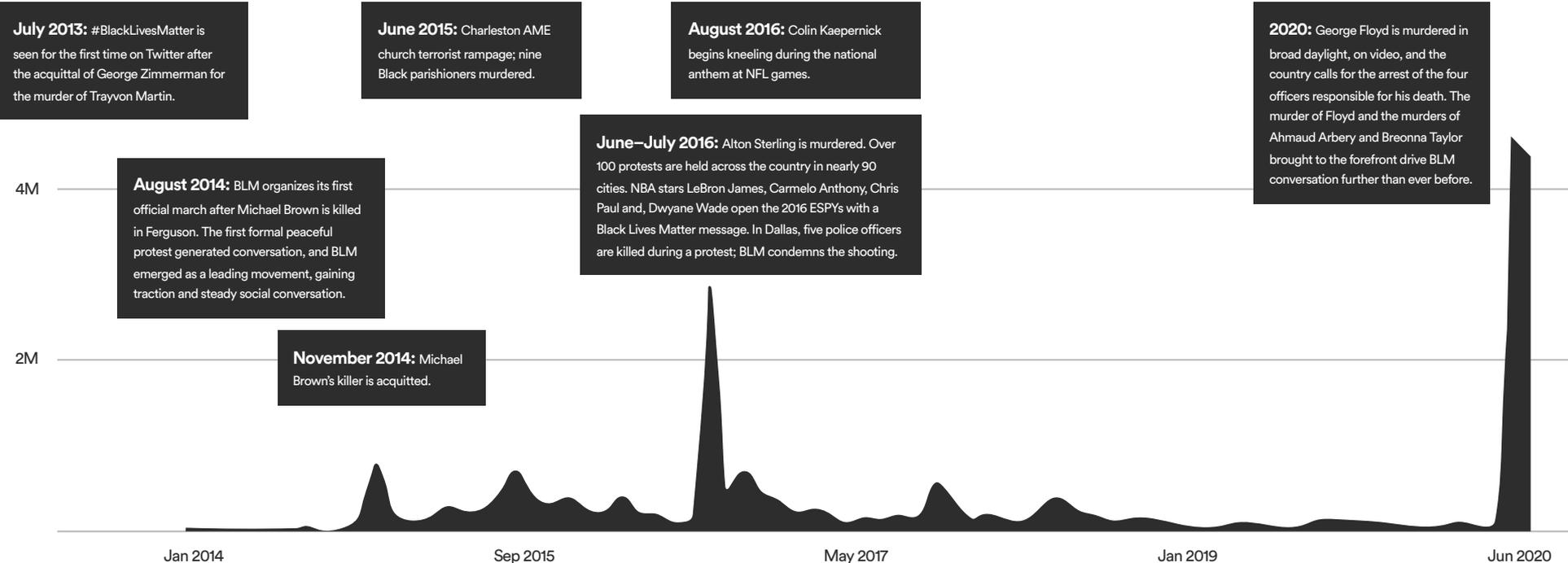




**IN THE PAST WEEK, 55% OF  
GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS HAVE  
PARTICIPATED IN  
#BLACKLIVESMATTER PROTESTS**

# THE BLM CONVERSATION HAS BECOME BIGGER THAN EVER BEFORE

BLM conversations have historically followed the news cycle



# BRANDS SPEAK OUT, BUT IT ALL LOOKS THE SAME

A black background with white letters has become the new default aesthetic for corporate support as marketing.



Chris Franklin  
@Campster

A statement from [Brand]®

We at [Brand] are committed to fighting injustice by posting images to Twitter that express our commitment to fighting injustice.

To that end, we offer this solemn white-on-black .jpeg that expresses vague solidarity with the Black community, but will quietly elide the specifics of what is wrong, what needs to change, or in what ways we will do anything about it. This is doubly true if [Brand] is particularly guilty of exacerbating these issues.

We hope this action encourages you to view [Brand] positively without, you know, expecting anything from us.

**[BRAND]**

You know the ones.™

3:56 PM - May 31, 2020 - [TweetDeck](#)

# BLACK LIVES MATTER IS MORE

# THAN A TREND IN YOUR FEED

The Black Lives Matter movement was formed by three Black women in 2013 in response to the nation's acknowledgement of and uproar over the Trayvon Martin tragedy and his murderer's acquittal. The BLM movement actively fights against state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism, while calling for equality for Black Americans and the defunding of the police.

**The Black Lives Matter movement is not a new one, though most brands are having conversations about police brutality for the first time this week.**

It took approximately two years for brands to acknowledge its existence, and seven years for brands to rally behind the movement in a mass way. Involvement remains limited to the news cycle.

**This movement cannot and should not be viewed as a passing cultural moment or event. It has been centuries in the making.**



# IT'S TIME TO CATCH UP TO YOUNGER CONSUMERS

1 IN 3

Gen Zers and Millennials say they have always been involved in societal and political causes

29% higher than gen pop

69%

say brands should support the Black Lives Matter movement

34% higher than gen pop

52%

will refuse to purchase a company's products or services upon learning it took a position contrary to their beliefs

41% higher than gen pop

## AND JOIN THIS GROWING MOVEMENT

*In times of tumult, it's hard to understand if we are at a tipping point — a place from where there's no return to the former ways — or just a short-lived change in behavior. Policy changes often come long after the events that precipitated them. And, of course, changing hearts and minds is a long and complicated process.*

*At this moment, it feels as if George Floyd is that inflection point. Not only has his death under the knee of a white police officer sparked protests around the country and the world, but polling suggests it has also changed the way white Americans see the issue of systemic bias in policing and in society.*

—The Cook Political Report

# 2014

**33%** of Americans said police officers are more likely to use excessive force on Black consumers, in the wake of the murder of Michael Brown and the resulting Ferguson riots

# 2020

**57%** of Americans say that police officers are more likely to use excessive force on Black consumers, in the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery

# BE BIGGER THAN A SOCIAL MOMENT,

# BE AN ALLY

Though its roots are in fighting against anti-Black violence and police brutality, Black Lives Matter has catapulted discussion around all the ways systemic racism exists in our society. And it will not be solved overnight. It will not be solved without people and institutions of privilege denouncing racial injustice, educating themselves, and then changing their behavior.

So as brands condemn police brutality and stand with Black communities, they must too be dedicated to taking down the racist structures within their industries and companies. Denouncing racism and standing in solidarity with the Black community in the form of a #BlackLivesMatter social post tailored to your brand is not enough.

Brands have a responsibility to acknowledge their privilege and utilize it for good. Brands have the opportunity to become allies, to truly stand with Black consumers who are continuously shortchanged by justice. And genuine and thoughtful allyship is not reacting to tragedy and relying on performative activism- becoming an ally must be an intrinsic part of brands and a part of their actions.



# WE SEE SIX KEY STEPS FOR BRANDS TO BECOME COMMITTED ALLIES...

# 1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK INTERNALLY

Creating a culture of allyship is not the responsibility of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). It is not their job to educate the entire company and change the brand. Examine and disclose your company culture, your board and employee makeup, and your company credo or mission statement. Do they reflect your consumer base and the diverse makeup of America? Does your mission mention diversity and inclusion? If you're not happy with what you find, announce a plan to make changes and allow your consumers to hold you accountable. Provide transparency regarding efforts to increase the number of Black employees, and increased retention. Add metrics to quarterly earnings reports and spell out investments in communities of color and donations to relevant causes. And as you examine your internal practices and prepare to distribute donations, make the changes necessary to close the pay disparity that has hurt Black consumers from the start.

51%

of Gen Z and Millennials say brands should change the way they do business (i.e., hiring and training)

Source: Scout Custom Brand Stand Study

IT STARTS FROM THE INSIDE OUT



68.9K Retweets · 318.3K Likes

UCMA Beauty's Sharon Chuter Is Holding Brands Accountable With 'Pull Up Or Shut Up'



## 2. PRIORITIZE REPRESENTATION

As brands re-assess diversity in their organizations and within their campaigns, understand that representation within advertising goes far beyond hiring an actor and checking a box. 66% of Black consumers say their ethnic identity is often portrayed stereotypically in advertising. Having Black voices at the table shaping brand decisions and crafting your campaigns is imperative in stepping up your representation in a meaningful way.

It doesn't stop when the :30 spot is filmed. Prioritize diverse partners and platforms when pushing out your message. Examine partnerships, affiliations, and even industry go-tos that have been called out for their racist structures, from Facebook to Refinery29 to Bon Appetit. Out of all advertising and marketing spend, only 5.2% is dedicated to any sort of multicultural media investments, even though Black Americans make up nearly 15% of the country.

Please select the below ways you think best describe how companies/brands should take a stand. Select all that apply.

	GEN POP	GEN Z / MILLENNIALS
Diversity/representation in advertising	30%	32%
Hiring diverse workforce	32%	26%
Supporting the local community	34%	22%
Diversity/inclusion training	24%	21%
Adjust their products to be more inclusive	16%	19%
Advertising messaging should reflect what they stand for	18%	18%
Advertising in different languages	14%	13%
Advocating for societal/political causes in social media	14%	13%
Customer service should be inclusive	19%	12%

### 3. LIFT UP BLACK VOICES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Not only have white business owners long had easier access to capital, but many Black businesses are more vulnerable now than ever given the impact of the coronavirus. Black communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and last week, the Washington Post reported “Black business owners in the US plummeted more than 40%, a far steeper drop than other racial groups.”

Becoming a better ally means showing up, and lifting up black communities—on a local and national level. Seek out and support Black-owned businesses in your community, and look to lists like [WeBuyBlack](#), [The Black Wallet](#), and [Official Black Wall Street](#) for businesses you can support now and forever. And don't stop there - rally behind new movements like the 15% Pledge, which calls on major retailers to give 15% of their shelf space to Black-owned businesses to mirror the population.

Commit to uplifting Black activists, artists, entrepreneurs, creators, youth, women, and LGBTQ voices who continue to be a part of your community. Follow, share, and amplify their platforms to make their voices heard.

#### Shea Moisture Is Giving \$20,000 Grants to 5 Social Justice Activists

The haircare brand asked the community to nominate changemakers on its social media accounts



1 IN 5 consumers will start buying products or services from a company/brand that takes a stand on a cause they believe in

51% of Gen Zers and Millennials want to see brands amplify the voices of Black leaders

## 4. MAKE YOUR \$\$\$ MATTER

**58% of Gen Zers and Millennials want brands to donate to a fund related to racial justice or grassroots groups** and we've already seen many step up to the plate. Brands like New Balance, Glossier, RXBAR, and Airbnb, among others, are giving consumers *more than words*. This week, Chipotle has not only pledged \$1MM throughout the year to fight systemic racism — starting with \$500k to The National Urban League — the brand is also turning its website and app into donation platforms so customers can show financial support. To create a bigger impact, Chipotle is empowering guac lovers to join their efforts by rounding up their orders to donate to the same cause. Chipotle's single donation is now expanding to a consistent, impactful commitment that is true to their brand action.

**52% of marketers globally said they'll hold back advertising spend for six months due to COVID-19. Take that unused budget to make significant change.** Move away from a one-and-done donation model. Be thoughtful and clear on where your donations are going and expand your financial support throughout the calendar year. As Pride finds new meaning this year, think about how you can transform your budget to support the Black LGBTQ+ community—from using physical stores as places for supplies during protests to directing your donations to organizations that support Black queer communities.

Glossier Is Donating \$1 Million to Black Lives Matter and Black-Owned Beauty Brands



Still can't understand how completely broke college students are donating their whole paycheck while celebrities and millionaires are posting a black square without any links or information to help. Don't be shy. Open your purse.

1:05 PM · Jun 2, 2020 · Tweet for #Yoru

**BANDCAMP TO DONATE 100% OF SALES ON JUNETEENTH TO NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND**

## 5. BE SPECIFIC ABOUT YOUR ACTION

Brands should also understand that even when a pledge of donations is made, consumers want more details. They want clear actions outlined acknowledging how brands will be living up to their own activism.

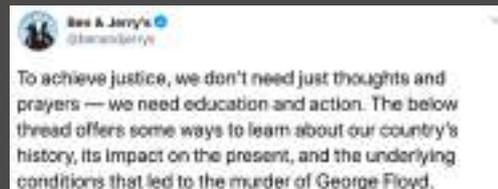
Video game companies, like Sony, Microsoft, Nintendo, and Activision, were behind the curve in releasing a response about the protests, and fell short among consumers. When Wizards of the Coast made their statement on June 1st, the company talked about donating to Black-centric charities, but failed to include the brand connection to the cause or how they would be contributing.

Ben & Jerry's is being praised for taking a different approach. Their first statement included a clear and detailed list of concrete steps they would take to dismantle white supremacy in all its forms. Ben & Jerry's is actively using their platform not to vaguely declare “support” but to further the movement with clear prompts and actions. And they did not stop at one post: a single message of support reads as an ad, and consumers want long-term allies.

Consumers are doing their homework—if a company or brand takes a stand on a cause they agree with

# 37%

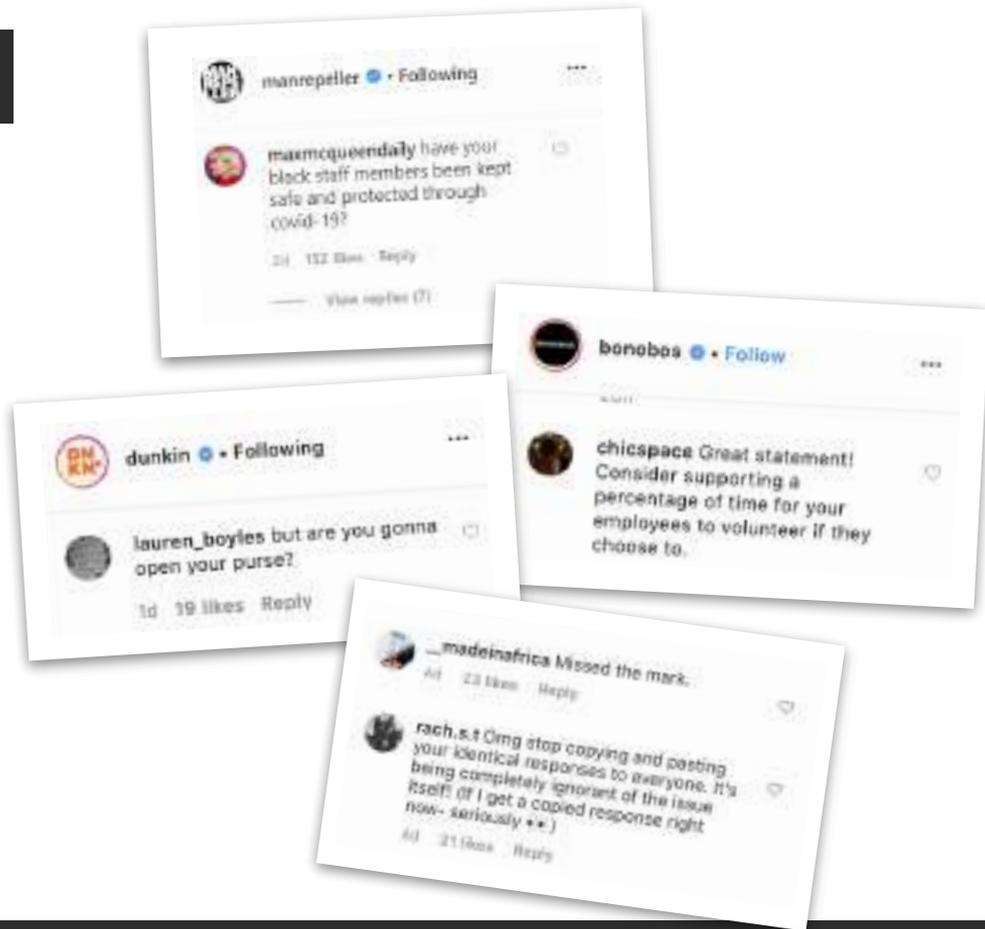
of consumers will research the company or brand to find out if they are being authentic



## 6. LISTEN TO YOUR CONSUMERS

As we continue to work to lift up Black voices, brands and agencies will need to continue to pay attention to their community. Consumers know best, and they are boldly using their voices to demand change from their favorite brands. When consumers challenge your #BlackoutTuesday post, listen. When consumers tell you your one-time donation this week isn't enough, listen. Right now, your comments section is your most valuable asset as your brand navigates a perhaps newfound commitment to activism.

Make social listening a part of your morning coffee routine and take the pulse of the comments sections of your social media. Show consumers that you're listening and that you value their opinions. Take their words as an opportunity to better your brand, and move forward in your activism.



IF YOU CHOOSE TO IGNORE CONSUMER CALLS FOR ACTION, BE PREPARED TO LOSE

# MOVING FORWARD

If your brand has come out to support BLM, to fight police brutality and to honor George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, you need to continue advocating and taking action in dismantling racism. There is no turning back to complicity.

While social posts and financial commitments have been made, the work doesn't start and end today. For most brands, this is the beginning of a much larger journey. So as we commit and continue to do better and be better allies for the Black community, ensure that you are both making space and creating value for the movement in your brand activism:

## MAKE SPACE

for new, diverse voices. Use your privilege to shine a light on Black communities by passing the mic to Black voices. This means taking a step back to advance the movement and put anti-racism in the spotlight, placing purpose > product.

## CREATE VALUE

that adds fuel to the movement. Beyond checking a box, how can your brand find real impact in a movement toward racial equality? This is not a one-and-done marketing stunt, and your brand must constantly evaluate how your actions are bringing real value to Black consumers.

# AND AS YOU TAKE ACTION, REMEMBER:

## ADMITTING PAST WRONGS IS NECESSARY.

As a brand just starting to enter into the conversation, know that committing to do the work will not be comfortable. Take the time to confront your guilt, your fear, and your gaps in knowledge, and use these as fuel for progress.

Now is not the time to be on the defensive. Do not try to sweep your brand history under the rug; consumers will call you out. Instead, acknowledge your missteps as your first step moving forward.

## DON'T DILUTE THE MOVEMENT WITH VAGUE LANGUAGE.

Your language is one of the first steps to take in showing you really see Black people and their experience in the world. A clear and strong message is the start in showing your commitment to supporting the Black community and dismantling racism. While not a comprehensive list, here are some helpful language callouts:

- Don't broadly say "community in pain". Be specific and say Black people.
- Call out white supremacy, racism, racists, and white privilege.
- Capitalize the "b" in "black" when referring to Black people.
- Don't say, "all lives matter".
- If you're talking about the victims of police brutality, make sure you say "police brutality".

## UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF A TREND BEFORE POSTING.

Avoid pseudo-activism or keyboard warriorship—relying on a hashtag or post to do the work instead of taking action.

#BlackoutTuesday originally began as a call to the music industry from two Black music industry professionals. But as the plan spread, reposts got distorted into a more general #BlackoutTuesday, one that not only included other industries but also other races. Many used #BlackLivesMatter burying informative and action-oriented posts that diluted its purpose.



**THANK YOU**