

# #BlackLivesMatter: The PR Response

Arefeh Ghane



# Overview

- History of #BlackLivesMatter
- “Sorry”
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- Black voices in PR
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  - Resources



History of...

**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER**



# “Sorry” - Blanket statements vs. Action statements

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]**<sup>®</sup>  
You know the ones.<sup>™</sup>

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“Sorry’ without action just means ‘shut up’” - Amelia Neville

# Corporate support: Blanket statements

The NFL released a blanket statement supporting the protests and calls-to-action that was brought about by the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

Kevin Seifert and Dan Graziano

May 23, 2018

ATLANTA -- NFL owners have unanimously approved a new national anthem policy that requires players to stand if they are on the field during the performance but gives them the option to remain in the locker room if they prefer, it was announced Wednesday.

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The NFL family is greatly saddened by the tragic events across our country. The protesters' reactions to these incidents reflect the pain, anger and frustration that so many of us feel.

Our deepest condolences go out to the family of Mr. George Floyd and to those who have lost loved ones, including the families of Ms. Breonna Taylor in Louisville, and Mr. Ahmaud Arbery, the cousin of Tracy Walker of the Detroit Lions.

As current events dramatically underscore, there remains much more to do as a country and as a league. These tragedies inform the NFL's commitment and our ongoing efforts. There remains an urgent need for action. We recognize the power of our platform in communities and as part of the fabric of American society. We embrace that responsibility and are committed to continuing the important work to address these systemic issues together with our players, clubs and partners.

- NFL COMMISSIONER ROGER GOODELL



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# Corporate support: Action statements

Ben & Jerry's not only released a message of solidarity and support, they also included a call-to-action to governing bodies outlining how to fight systemic racism in America.

## Central To The Mission

Central to the Mission of Ben & Jerry's is the belief that all 3 parts must thrive equally in a manner that commands deep respect for individuals in & outside the Company & supports the communities of which they are a part.

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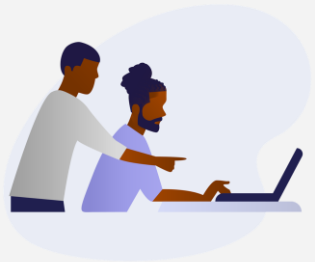
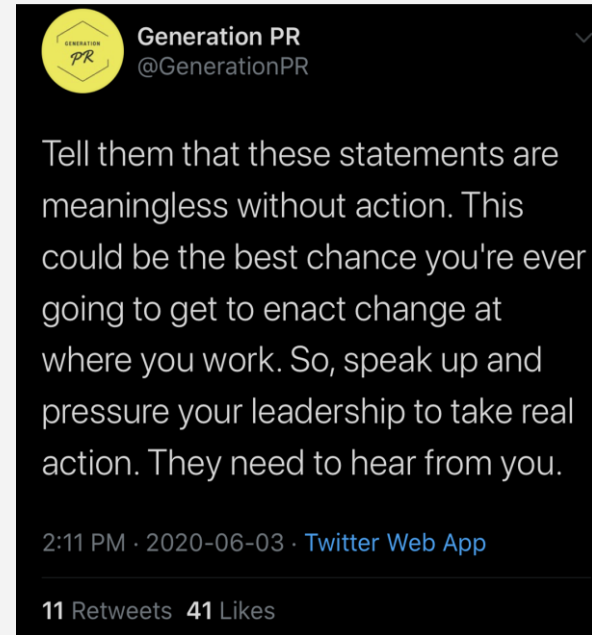


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# Supporting Black, Indigenous and POC in the workplace



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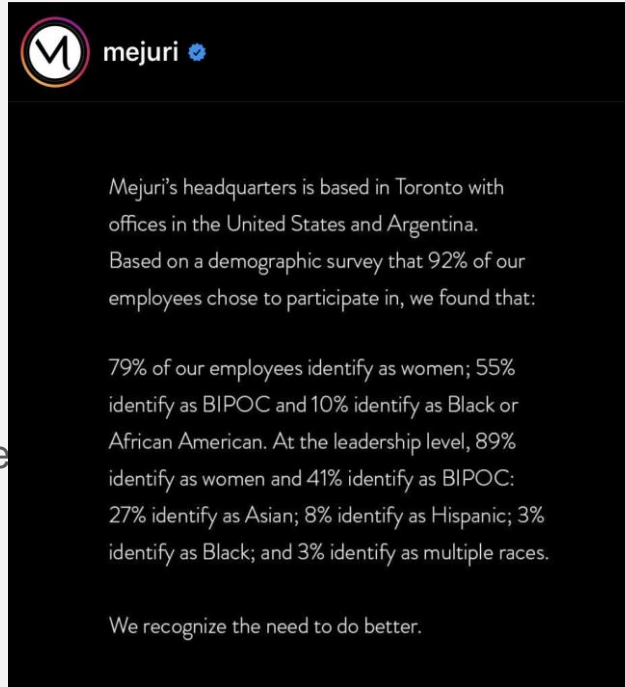


# Black voices in PR

Not including Black voices behind the scenes, especially in PR, can be damaging to your brand.

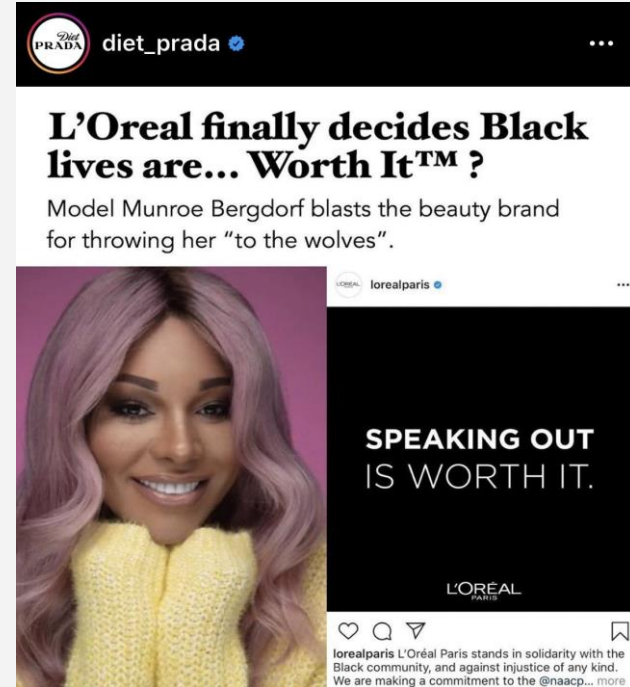
Know how diverse your organization is so you can work on becoming more inclusive and empathetic to the issues that BIPOC face.

The PR industry should be enthusiastically eager to represent all Black, Indigenous and people of colour.



A screenshot of a tweet from the account 'mejuri'. The tweet text reads: 'Mejuri's headquarters is based in Toronto with offices in the United States and Argentina. Based on a demographic survey that 92% of our employees chose to participate in, we found that: 79% of our employees identify as women; 55% identify as BIPOC and 10% identify as Black or African American. At the leadership level, 89% identify as women and 41% identify as BIPOC: 27% identify as Asian; 8% identify as Hispanic; 3% identify as Black; and 3% identify as multiple races. We recognize the need to do better.'

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A screenshot of a tweet from the account 'diet\_prada'. The tweet text reads: 'L'Oreal finally decides Black lives are... Worth It™ ? Model Munroe Bergdorf blasts the beauty brand for throwing her "to the wolves".' Below the text is a photograph of model Munroe Bergdorf with long, wavy, light purple hair, wearing a bright yellow, textured knit sweater. To the right of the photo is a black graphic with the text 'SPEAKING OUT IS WORTH IT.' and the L'ORÉAL PARIS logo. Below the photo and graphic are social media interaction icons (heart, comment, share) and a caption: 'lorealparis L'Oréal Paris stands in solidarity with the Black community, and against injustice of any kind. We are making a commitment to the @naacp... more'.

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# Personal Experience

As a current student just getting started in the industry, my personal experience has been more of what I've observed.

- First year of college
- First CPRS event
- *Diversity in PR* - Keynote

As an incoming PR professional I want to be confident that the industry I'm entering understands the importance of supporting, uplifting and including BIPOC within the industry and publicly. Representation matters, from start to finish, in all walks of life.

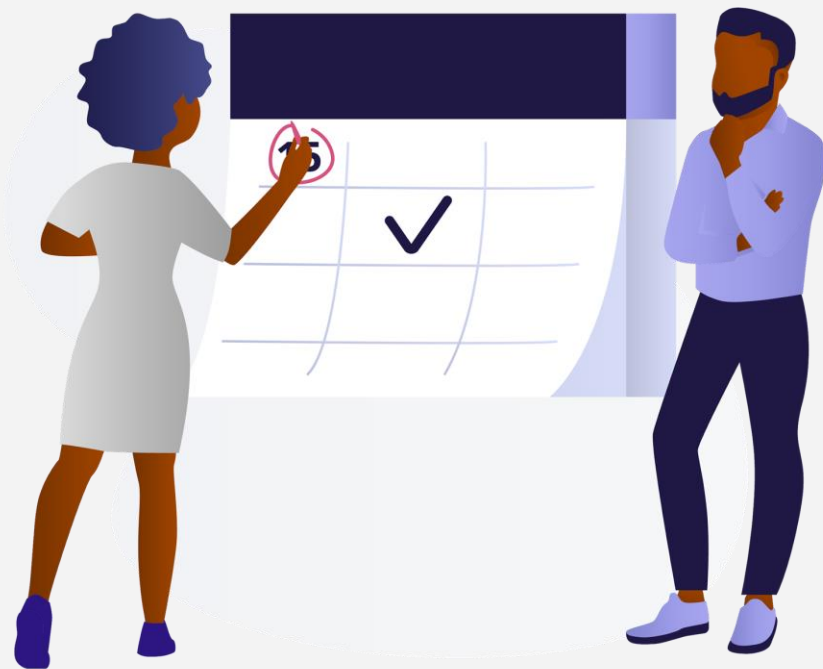


# What's next?

Change can only happen if you actually believe in and understand what it is you're fighting for.

You need to understand how to be a better ally to your Black, Indigenous, and POC coworkers.

These 5 ways of supporting Black people have been echoed across the digital world and are a starting point to becoming anti-racist and more inclusive.



# Listen, Learn, Educate

Recognize and understand your privilege.

Educate yourself and those around you.

Speak up.  
Silence is complicity.

Provide internal resources for Black and Indigenous employees.

Support incoming and current Black and Indigenous professionals.



# Resources

1. Gabriel Press and Relationships - Mentorship program
2. Code Black Communications Network
3. Birds of All Feathers: Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right - Michael Bach
4. Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)
5. The diversity and inclusion revolution - Deloitte, 2018
  - a. Six signature traits of inclusive leadership: Thriving in a diverse new world
6. Byblacks.com
7. @BlackOwned.TO
8. Black Owned Independent Brands and Businesses
9. Style Bee - Black-Owned Brands from Canada
10. Chapters-Indigo
11. Netflix



# Thank you!

**Arefeh Ghane** (Are - Fuh)

## **About me**

Completing my final year in the bachelor of public relations program at Humber College.

Passionate about social justice, world travel and eating... lots of eating.

## **Contact**

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Questions?

