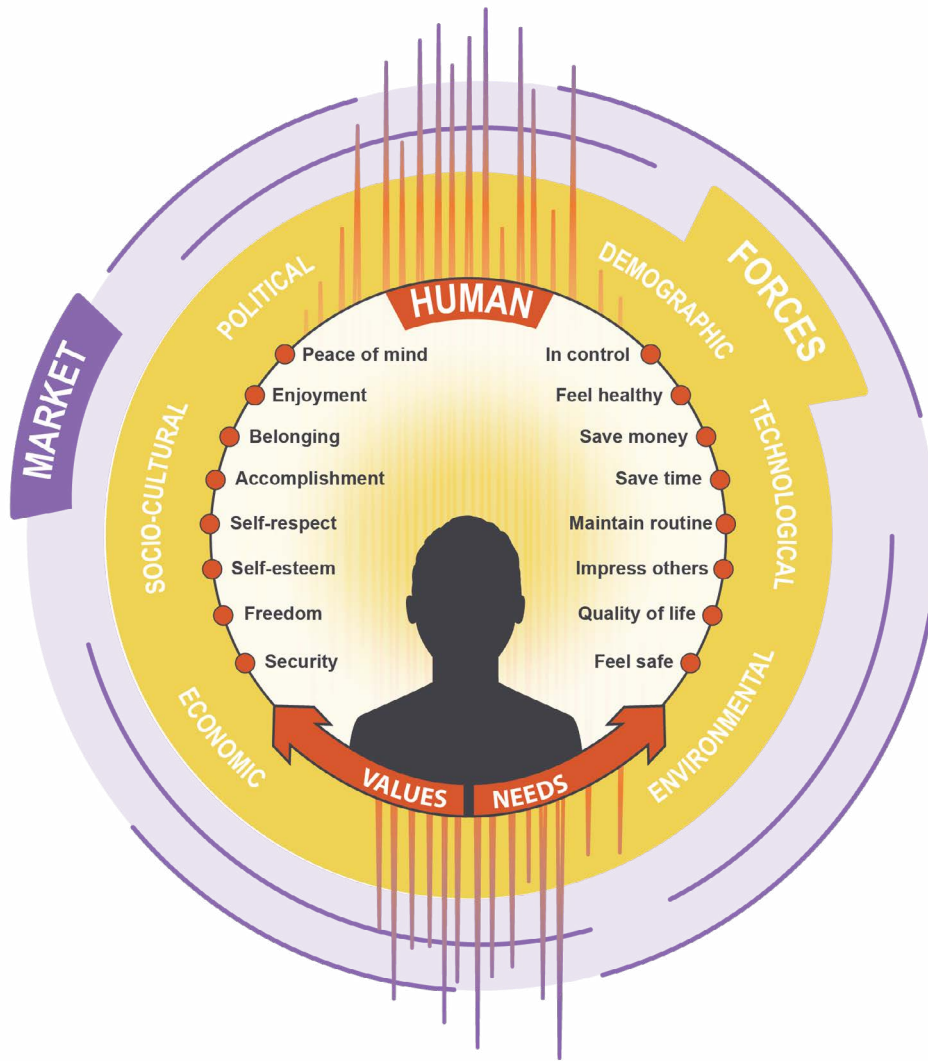


TRENDS + FORCES

Diversity + Inclusion

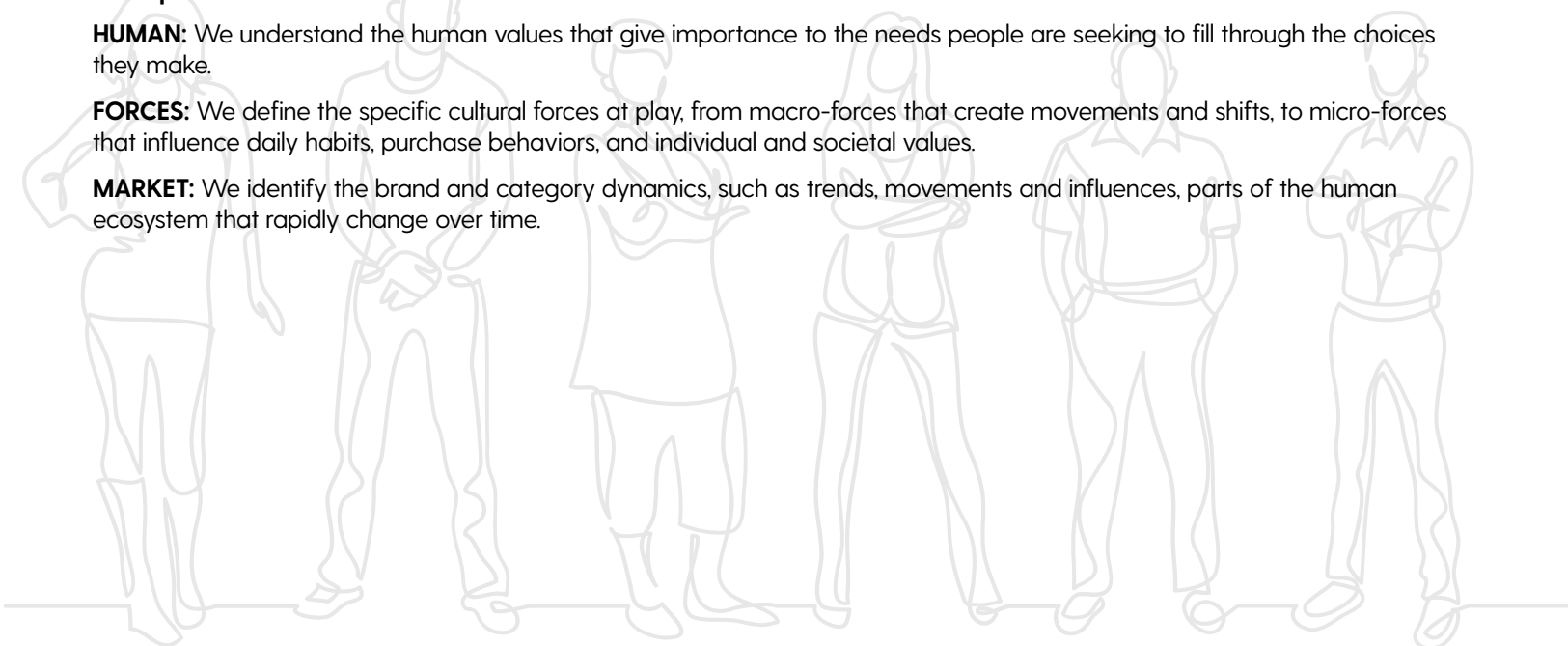


Decisions are driven by human values, influenced by cultural forces and shaped in the context of the market.

HUMAN: We understand the human values that give importance to the needs people are seeking to fill through the choices they make.

FORCES: We define the specific cultural forces at play, from macro-forces that create movements and shifts, to micro-forces that influence daily habits, purchase behaviors, and individual and societal values.

MARKET: We identify the brand and category dynamics, such as trends, movements and influences, parts of the human ecosystem that rapidly change over time.



Diversity + Inclusion



FORCES AT PLAY

socio-cultural
economic



VALUES AT PLAY

belonging
diversity
caring

The racial reckoning in recent years, which hit a boiling point with the death of George Floyd in May 2020, ignited an exploration of the structural and systemic issues that defined the inequality, injustice, and emergent racial trends in our nation's history – and how those same issues continue to affect the daily lives for people of color across America. Let's dive into the continuing racial injustice against Black Americans, what diversity and inclusion look like in the office, and how to celebrate brands, creators, and stories of minorities and people of color.



RETHINKING PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK AMERICA

Did you know that only 4 in 10 Americans have a meaningful, daily interaction with someone of a different race or ethnicity? Even decades after civil rights, racial injustice is still prevalent in our country today – on an institutional level, like inequity in healthcare or education, and on an individual level, like in harmful stereotypes and misconceptions of Black Americans.

In our [June Connections Roundtable](#), we met with Pepper Miller, an author, Black-American consumer subject matter expert, and president and senior analyst at Hunter-Miller, and Jean Accius, president and CEO at Creating Healthier Communities, a nonprofit organization that brings nonprofits, businesses, and communities together to improve community health. They discussed the historic discrimination against Black Americans, how broken systems largely affect people of color, and how to create actual change in our society on these issues.

Countering Stereotypes. Many Black Americans have to counter stereotypes in their daily life – which affects behavior like where they go, what they do, and how they speak, causing them to be hyper aware of their environment in a way that White people don't have to worry about. This vigilance and constant need to be alert, in order to change the way they're perceived, stems from the long history of mistreatment and discrimination aimed at Black Americans.

"It comes to constantly having to counter those stereotypes or constantly having to be in fear of me being an African American male. Having to be in fear if there's a police officer driving behind me. I have to do certain things. I have to make sure that my hands are up. If I get pulled over because I was driving too fast, I need to say, officer, I'm going to take out my wallet now. Is that okay? I mean there's all of these things you go through. Will I be able to see my kids? Will I get home safely? You just never know...Those are lived experiences." - Jean Accius

Systemic Racism. Many of our nation's economic institutions, structures, and systems were designed by White people, for White people, which means they place Black and other people of color at an inherent disadvantage. This creates a new set of hurdles Black Americans have to navigate in society today.

"One of the blind spots that we have is misunderstanding that we are not post-racial. Black people have come a long way since civil rights...I don't even think it's 60 years old yet. We were enslaved longer than we've had civil rights. But people look at a Jean Accius and a Barack Obama and Michelle Obama and Rosalind Brewer and Ken Chenault, and what they fail to understand is that...we are still navigating through broken systems. Education, broken. Housing, broken. Finance, broken. Healthcare, broken, and of course the justice system is broken. Those are huge barriers to the success of Black people...When you think about Black people and what our opportunities are, we have a funnel versus others who may have an opportunity of a three or four lane highway."

- Pepper Miller

Inclusion in Business. What role do businesses and corporate leaders play in addressing this complex and difficult issue? Especially in industries that are notorious for lack of diversity and inclusion – like market research – Accius pointed to efforts in shaping office cultures, policies, and the way communities of color are represented.

“Employers have to be very intentional both about creating that culture of inclusion and also being very clear about what it looks like as it relates to the business operations. You can’t assume that what is happening in the broader ecosystem doesn’t impact your workers. We have a lot of work to do both in terms of creating the space for these conversations within our organizations, and then not just creating the space to talk about it, but also doing something about it that is tangible.” - Jean Accius

DIVERSITY + INCLUSION IN THE OFFICE

Interest in creating more inclusive workplaces skyrocketed after George Floyd’s death in 2020, as corporations wanted to address systemic racism and power imbalances within their own organizations. Three years later, some companies are changing their approach to DEI, even renaming their departments to include the word “belonging.” But while U.S. workers are becoming more diverse, some companies can’t keep up with the new demographic realities and are lagging behind in outdated, ineffective DEI methods.

Corporate Belonging. According to a 2022 report by the think tank Coqual, roughly half of Black and Asian professionals with a bachelor’s or more advanced degree don’t feel a sense of belonging at work. Last year, the Society for Human

Resource Management conducted its first survey on corporate belonging. Respondents said that identity-based communities, like employee resource groups, helped foster belonging, while mandatory diversity training did not.

What does this mean for businesses moving forward? [Inclusion is crucial](#) to create and sustain a diverse organization. While diversity is still an important marker, it can be hard to measure, focuses on differences, places people in buckets, and can’t easily account for intersectionality. But measuring inclusion within your organization focuses on shared experiences, applies to everybody, measures the impact of intersectionality, and shows how to “grow the pie” for everyone, leading to a greater sense of belonging.

Keeping Up with Diversity. The U.S. workforce is [becoming more diverse](#) in race, ethnicity, and age, with far more people of color and workers over 55 than four decades ago.

- ➔ The share of U.S. workers who are non-white, Latino or both nearly doubled to about 40% in 2019 from only 23% in 1979, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- ➔ With more older people staying economically active, today over 37 million U.S. workers are 55 and up.

More demographic diversity will force employers to change some of their ways in order to foster diverse, inclusive workplaces – like recruiting more workers from diverse institutions like historically Black colleges and universities, developing mentor programs that are available to all and not invitation-only, and up-skilling. It can also mean collecting data about which workers are underrepresented, trying to fill any gaps detected, or revising dress and grooming codes that ban hairstyles more commonly worn by Black workers.



Photo Credit: Aaron Sylvan, Flickr

Forbes.com features a column dedicated to DE&I topics, written by Paolo Gaudiano, Adjunct Associate Professor at NYU.

READ: [DE&I Blog by Paolo Gaudiano](#)

WATCH: [Why Inclusion is More Important Than Diversity, with Paolo Gaudiano](#)



CELEBRATING MINORITY BRANDS, CREATORS, AND STORIES

In the wave of the racial divide starting in the summer of 2020, many consumers wanted to support minority-owned businesses, creators, and stories. In the years since, brands and businesses have made it a priority to showcase and highlight all minorities and people of color. Even big corporations, like HBO Max and Target, are making it easier for consumers to support content and products by minorities.

Minorities in Entertainment. Streaming services have started to uplift marginalized voices, making it easy for viewers to find stories by and about minorities and people of color.

- Through the month of June on HBO Max, there was a home page spotlight for [Black Creativity](#), housing a collection of stories to celebrate Black joy, art, and love in honor of Juneteenth – including films, documentaries, and TV shows like *Super Soul*, *Abbott Elementary*, *Insecure*, *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, and *King Richard*.
- During Asian American and Pacific Islanders month in May, HBO Max also spotlighted its [AAPI collection](#), with curated programming intended to celebrate stories like *Aquaman*, *Tokyo Vice*, *Crazy Rich Asians*, and *Bend It Like Beckham*.
- Disney+ had a home page spotlight to celebrate pride month in June, with films, TV, and shorts like *Pride From Above*, *Out*, *Grown-ish*, and *Love, Victor*.
- Disney+ also had a Black stories section, with different sub-sections for Black Joy, Celebrating Black Creatives, Hosted by Black Talent, Critically Acclaimed Black Stories, and Black and LGBTQ+.
- Prime Video had a spotlight for Amazon Originals and Exclusives that included Black leads.

This trend of highlighting stories by and about minorities makes it incredibly easy for non-minorities to find diverse content, to learn more about different races and cultures, and to broaden their awareness and change their perceptions.

Minority-Owned Businesses. Some retailers, like [Target](#), [Ulta](#), and [Sephora](#) include both in-store and online sections to highlight Black-owned and founded brands, making it easy for consumers to support brands by people of color.

Sephora also changed their reward system, adding an additional option – previously, you could save up your rewards and exchange them for free, trial-size products. Now, if you don't want any of the rewards products, you can instead choose to put your rewards points toward a nonprofit, where 500 points is equal to a \$10 donation. In the month of June, the home page on the Sephora app was highlighting the National Black Justice Coalition as their nonprofit of choice.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2023

- Racial injustice is still prevalent in our country today, which means businesses and employers can play a vital role in addressing diversity and inclusion in office cultures, policies, and the way communities of color are represented at work.
- Employers need to make sure that their DEI practices are measurable, effective, and keeping up with the rapidly changing demographics of U.S. workers.
- Consumers want to educate themselves and support minorities and communities of color by shopping products from POC-owned businesses and watching content from racially and ethnically diverse people groups – highlighting minority creators is a good way to celebrate and uplift diverse art and stories.

HBO Inspires

At the heart of HBO is our passion for making a difference, and every day we are using our platform to educate, inspire thoughtful action and help make the world a better place.

Warner Bros. Discovery's Corporate Social Responsibility team works in close partnership with content development and production teams in order to ensure that content involving major societal themes and issues is developed and addressed responsibly, ensuring that we capture authentic, representative depictions and portrayals while also providing viewers and audiences with support, resources, and ways to continue the conversation.

BLACK CREATIVITY HUB
HBO celebrates the voices of Black creatives and talents.
[LEARN MORE >](#)

HBO PROUD
Celebrate Pride Month year round with our extensive slate of LGBTQIA+ stories.
[LEARN MORE >](#)

Nuestras Voces
Celebrate Latin Heritage with these iconic series and performances.
[LEARN MORE >](#)

HBO Inspires showcases 3 hubs for stories and performances Black, LGBTQIA+, and Latin artists.

Photo Credit: HBO Max



**HEART
+ MIND**
STRATEGIES