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# WHAT BLACK PROFESSIONALS WANT THEIR EMPLOYERS TO KNOW

2020 was a year of racial reckoning, especially in the corporate space. Many powerful, wealthy organizations were called out for marginalizing Black communities and employees – and called in to improve their diversity, inclusion and corporate social responsibility practices.

In the wake of this past summer’s protests against police brutality and systemic racism, Black DiversityInc employees anonymously offered their feedback on what they want businesses and allies to know about the ways racism and injustice impacted them and how organizations can support Black employees.

## On dealing with current events and racist violence in the news...

**"If there is an instance of racist violence, I might need a mental health day – a short break from the questions and negative news."**

**"Upon hearing news of injustice, I'll also want to hear from my leader at some point. I want to get their take on things, to see if we're on the same page or differ on the issue at hand."**

**"In corporate, I need partners to help me manage the situation and determine what next steps to support our employees will be. Partners from communications and HR should always be close at hand."**

## On the importance of support from leaders...

**"I need a safe space; the ability to be candid about feelings without backlash."**

**"I need security. Black employees need to know that if they speak out on injustices or need mental health assistance, their jobs will be there in the morning."**

**"Not just 'allyship' but leading the way. Not just 'standing with me' but standing in front of me in recognition that this is not just my fight – this fight is on all of us."**

## On discussing racism...

“I need you to not ask me to be your emotional support by speaking about the issues in such a way that it becomes more about YOUR feelings and thoughts than my experiences.”

“I need you to understand that just because I’m Black, I don’t have all of the answers. I can’t tell all of you what to say and what to do next. You have to know what you’re willing to do to ensure the tragedies stop. You must know what action you want to take to bring equality and justice to the forefront and hold folks accountable.”

“Recognize that, for me, talking about racism is not an academic exercise. When I’m asked to speak about it, it will be emotional. Every Black person in American has to navigate their oppression. It doesn’t matter if you are the first Black President or a random dude on the corner. No one who is Black escapes having to do it.”

## On creating systemic change in the working world and beyond...

“We need organizational support from leadership – and not cookie-cutter support either. We need real, sustained, lasting support that will dismantle the impact of systemic racism in the organization.”

“Please educate yourselves on what systemic racism actually is and how it permeates almost every law and interaction this country has with Black people.”

“Be action-oriented. Organizations need to use their power to advocate for policies at the local, state and federal level that will protect Black people and support organizations committed to justice reform.”

“Hire, promote and support Black professionals. That’s the only way to ensure lasting progress.”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

- How can our company center the points of view of Black employees without forcing them to be our sole educators? What resources are already out there?
- How has our company allied with historically underrepresented communities in the past? What did we learn from 2020 that we are using to move forward?



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