

## Brands Doing Just Black History Month Efforts or Black Casting in Ads Is Not Effective Marketing

February is the time that many brands rush to recognize and give some love to this key demographic, but it requires much more to gain their loyalty. With Black Americans 47M strong, \$1.6T buying power, 32 median age, 90% college-bound, and unprecedented impact, this is a business imperative for all companies as customers worthy of equitable investment at every level. Yet targeted spend has steadily declined replaced by "inclusive" one-size-fits-all ads merely featuring Black talent.

Black Americans are laser sharp in calling out token efforts and "POC" casting. **Over 60% are dissatisfied with mainstream portrayals and do not think brands recognize, respect, or represent them properly.** As social influencers with a gravitas voice who drive demand and trends, they want their stories told, and brands to recognize their bottom-line value.

**INFUSION by castells** has helped Fortune 100 brands successfully connect and build long-term relationships with relevant **ROI-Powered Ideas®**. **This means Return on Investment and Relationship Opportunities thru Insights.** A person's cultural lens affects how they view and process everything. Cultural authenticity is a subtle, very nuanced art. Effective work has to be within their content, context, experiences, and what matters to them and their community.

Being deeply rooted in the Black community is predicated on consistent actions and purpose – and when done correctly is immensely reciprocated, as our Clients' results verify.

Cultural Identity is paramount. Being part of the Black community is as important as being American. Beyond representation, it's about being understood. **90% say that authentic ad portrayals has a very strong impact on purchase decisions.** Because it says 'the company understands, respects and values my community, my life and needs'. Doing effective marketing is founded on actions and purpose, not just a few ads, sponsorships and stuff. Results is not one campaign or offer but consistent engagement, offerings and connections.

To succeed, demonstrate the company's commitment and understanding of the community's cultural values, journey and motivations and as individuals in all their depth and breadth. Connect your brand by talking to their unique dimensions of quality, value and status, their humor, codes, and cultural themes and passions that matter – **pride, identity, family, parenting, exceptionalism, celebration, resilience, self-expression, self-reliance, success, their music, sports, content, food, and faith.** Present your products as solutions to enhance and empower their lives, resolve concerns, save time, money, or effort, enable daily indulgences or taking control to live life on their own terms. Support their community, causes, celebrities, and role models, 75% of Black American consumers say these are very effective brand motivators – and supported by research across categories.



Being deeply rooted in the Black community is a constant, intentional act of loyalty that both increases companies' bottom lines and genuinely underscores America's richness as a people of infusion.