



# THE 2021 CEO BLUEPRINT FOR RACIAL EQUITY: COMPANY PROFILE

A REPORT BY POLICYLINK, FSG, AND JUST CAPITAL | JUNE 2021

WITHIN THE COMPANY

WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

WITHIN SOCIETY



## Widening the Screen to Disrupt Racial Bias

For years, Procter & Gamble (P&G) has set a high bar for purpose-driven marketing, leveraging its corporate voice and tremendous market reach to shift narratives and mindsets at the national level. Since 2006, P&G has run the “My Black is Beautiful” (MBIB) [website](#) and [Facebook page](#). In addition to featuring videos, resources, and products to empower Black women and girls, these platforms have engaged millions of people in meaningful conversation around perceptions of Black culture and Black beauty. Recently, building off the MBIB initiative, P&G doubled down on its efforts to shine a light on systemic racism, tackle racial bias, and drive deeper, thoughtful dialogue that leads to action through a thought-provoking series of short films titled *The Talk*, *The Look*, and *The Choice*.

Originally debuted in 2017, *The Talk* focused on the uncomfortable but necessary conversations Black parents must have with their children about safely navigating situations and environments where their mere presence as a Black person can place them in danger. The film chronicled conversations across decades, spotlighting how far the nation still needs to go.

Then, in 2019, *The Look* examined the painful biases and microaggressions faced by boys and men of color on a daily basis. This mostly silent film exposed how looks, gestures, and other non-verbal cues perpetuate the status quo by presenting subtle and not-so-subtle manifestations of racism.

*The Choice*, released in 2020, explored concepts of power and privilege and challenged White people to take anti-racist actions, urging them to, as written and styled on the website, “Read, Listen, Donate, Plan, March, Vote, Speak Out, Step In, and Step Up.”

Finally, *Widen the Screen*, released in 2021, spotlights harmful racial biases against Black boys, mothers, and men. The film disrupts these biases by showing a wider picture of Black life, and implores viewers and media-makers alike to “Widen the screen so we can widen our view.”

## How P&G is taking action on racial inequality – and how you can too

**Fueling the movement.** During history-making moments, we often see companies issuing flashy statements or launching expensive campaigns that are fleeting, performative, and do little to advance the broader equity movement. *The Talk*, *The Look*, *The Choice*, and [Widen the Screen](#), build on each other and were thoughtfully rolled out over multiple years to keep issues of racial equity at the forefront and change cultural and national discourse. The series also moved viewers from talk into action by providing additional resources that go beyond an ad. “Communication is just the tip of the iceberg. When we start a campaign, we don’t start that conversation with, ‘What do you want to say?’ We start it with, ‘What are you doing?’” [says](#) Damon Jones, P&G’s chief communications officer. In tandem with *The Look*, P&G provided a detailed community discussion guide and other educational tools to prompt personal reflection and build a deeper understanding of human behavior as it relates to bias. Similarly, *The Choice* directed viewers to an extensive web-based resource laying out multiple starting points. Lastly, the three films also made a powerful statement by focusing on social, rather than corporate-oriented messaging. This marketing was a message and call to action paid for by P&G in support of the movement, not an ad for any P&G brands or products, which helped enhance the campaign’s integrity and authenticity.

**Centering the voices of those with lived experience.** P&G’s shorts were designed and produced by diverse internal and external teams – including multicultural marketing agencies led by Black creatives – and informed by input from community stakeholders. Anita May, the account lead for *The Talk* [shared](#): “We went to great lengths to have people of color of all ages and genders tell us about being given their ‘Talk,’ those they’d had with their children/grandchildren, as well as experiences with racial bias. The campaign film that [we] created could only have been expertly crafted after understanding the actual words and stories of racial bias from many voices who have lived it.” By centering the voice, wisdom, and experience of those whose stories are often left untold, companies can strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of their marketing campaigns.

**Aligning external messaging with internal actions.** Words without action are meaningless and can cost a brand its credibility. P&G’s films ran parallel to implementation of internal initiatives and new benchmarks that seek to further equity and inclusion. For example, rollout of *The Choice* was accompanied by specific [actions](#) to assess and eliminate inequities within P&G’s marketing policies and practices, including accelerating investments in Black-owned and -operated media companies, reviewing media placements to see how P&G brands support minority- and women-owned businesses, and adopting industry targets to measure if Black people are represented fairly in the company’s advertising. Simultaneously, P&G is also working to harness collective impact through its [Take on Race](#) coalition, which brings some of America’s largest corporations under one umbrella to create and scale equitable programs that address structural flaws across issues like employment, wealth creation, health care, and education.

**Changing the system.** Beyond the narrative, P&G is also investing in a talent development and partnership platform that enables and advocates for [increased inclusion of Black creators](#) across the advertising, film, and television industries.

Without authenticity and sustained engagement, brand activism otherwise runs the risk of seeming opportunistic and hypocritical. P&G’s ongoing work demonstrates how, if done right, corporate marketing and communications [can support societal change](#).

## PolicyLink

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