

# THREE PATHS TO DEI FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND BEYOND



Organizations can be a positive force this Black History Month by expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives throughout the entire company and past the month of February, and by cultivating an environment where every employee feels comfortable to be themselves. But DEI initiatives are only part of the story. To fully walk the talk about fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace, organizations must also commit to making space for authentic employee voices, improving diversity training, and focusing on philanthropy. Ultimately, the aggregation of these changes must show up as tangible results.

## **Making space for authentic employee voices**

[Employee resource groups \(ERGs\)](#) give employees an opportunity to engage in open, honest discussions on a variety of DEI-related topics. BMC has ten global ERGs, and our Black@BMC ERG focuses on individual and collective lived experiences and recognizes the importance of Black history while also emphasizing the current state and near future for our Black employees.

New this year, our “Black Future” series uplifts their voices, showcasing how exceptional employees and organizational leaders are making history and shaping the future, as well as recognizing and celebrating their journeys. It’s an authentic, thought-provoking, and exciting complement to our existing, ongoing ERG Diversity Speaker Series, which invites speakers to share their insights on a variety of DEI issues.

During these sessions, we’ve heard from colleagues on topics ranging from how to find an invested professional mentor to how you can prepare your children for their first encounter with racism. This

has resulted in an excellent collection of voices, stories, perspectives, and history that has inspired our audiences to reshape their own narratives.

Two of our ERGs have executive-level sponsorship focused on equitable pay, career advancement, and group advocacy. Our Black@BMC executive sponsor is BMC Chief Marketing Officer [Martyn Etherington](#), who views the role as a conduit for action and change. "I can provide a voice and bring a bias for action to our team of 71 individuals of Black@BMC," he shares. "But it is our outstanding captain, Jannelle Allong-Diakabana, and our Black@BMC members, who I listen to and learn from. Together we will map our goals for what constitutes success, and we will hold ourselves accountable for making a positive difference for our members and BMC's overall success."

"Throughout all levels of management at BMC, we've seen a significant increase in interest in DEI initiatives, as our business leaders and executive leadership team have boosted their engagement, joined one (or more) of our ERGs, and regularly attended the monthly meetings where we share resources, events, personal perspectives, and more. We believe that we are all responsible for forward progress and we do this by learning from each other and participating in the community."

## Improving diversity training

Building and maintaining a robust DEI presence also means developing and repeating training programs that go beyond rubber-stamping a DEI message. According to [Denise Lee Yohn](#), a one-size-fits-all approach won't get it done, nor will traditional training approaches that focus on organizational values or collect annual survey results.

A newer approach to training and culture-building is to empower everyone in the organization, where people at every level and across every department play different roles in developing and maintaining an inclusive culture. Employees need to be involved, have the opportunity to provide candid feedback, and most importantly, help champion the desired behaviors. At BMC, we use DEI survey feedback and stakeholder interviews to curate content, define strategy, and listen to our employees.

During one of the aforementioned ERG Diversity Speaker Series sessions, guest speaker Melissa Dobbins, CEO of [Career.Place](#), enforced that we can cultivate organizational change by identifying and executing actions, evaluating results, applying lessons, and then repeating it again and again.

Part of that training also involves understanding language—and harmful language. BMC is a member of the [Inclusive Naming Initiative](#), a business collective tasked with defining processes and tools to remove harmful language and replace it with neutral terms. [Here](#) is a basic guide to problematic terms you might use every day without being conscious of their impact, and alternative options. BMC is addressing this with our own employees and partners through a style guide [resource](#) on how to use inclusive language.

## Focusing on philanthropy

As a global organization, BMC—and our employees—have an opportunity to engage, to shape and produce both immediate and long-lasting positive impact for our organization and society. Monthly observances like Black History Month amplify those opportunities, allowing us to spotlight ways to learn, give back, and pay it forward to the communities and people we are celebrating by seeding action, opening doors, and fueling progress. We invite you to join us in our support of the following [organizations](#):

- [Algorithmic Justice League](#)
- [Black Girls Code](#)
- [Generating Genius](#)
- [Giving Gap](#)
- [Juneteenth Legacy and Nia Cultural Center](#)
- [Worldreader](#)

Other ways you can get involved and expand your world view this Black History Month and throughout the year include:

- Checking out our [Black@BMC ERG Spotify playlist](#).
- Trying [CulturePop](#), a self-paced, micro-learning app that encourages cross-cultural curiosity. BMC's corporate membership is available to all employees to use within their teams to help expand their cultural awareness.
- Watching [Coded Bias](#), the documentary that explores the widespread bias in artificial intelligence (AI), now streaming on Netflix.
- Exploring this [YouTube playlist](#) to learn more about how to be an [ally](#).

Prioritizing people and doing the right thing are two of our core values. And as global citizens, we also advocate for awareness, empathy, and curiosity to understand each other. We can accomplish this by continuing to celebrate and uplift Black voices; taking ownership of what we do and don't know; and giving back to the historically excluded communities impacted by racism, inequities, and discrimination. These are powerful steps on the path to ensuring that the [Autonomous Digital Enterprise](#) includes everyone.