

# Fit, quality, and trust among DEI elements important to Black consumers

Article

**A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is critical to Black shoppers—but there's more to DEI than hiring and employee-engagement practices. A lack of diversity,**

equity, and inclusion was the No. 1 reason that Black adults in the US were dissatisfied with their purchases, per an October 2021 study by McKinsey & Company.

At first glance, their other reasons for dissatisfaction—such as lack of product fit, quality, or value—may seem generic. But these concerns are also related to DEI, which permeates all aspects of the shopping experience. For example:

- **Product fit and expertise** can relate to the differing styles and needs of Black consumers with varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- **Convenience and quality** concerns can include a desire for wider selections of foods that reflect the diverse roots of Black consumers.
- **Trust and value** are informed by Black consumers’ education and everyday experience. These concerns may be further influenced by the statuses of individual Black consumers—including whether they are immigrants or native-born Americans, high-income or low-income earners, and Gen X, seniors, or a generation in between.

**Top Reasons US Black Adults Are Dissatisfied with Purchases, by Purchase Type, Oct 2021**

% of respondents in each group

	Consumer technology	Insurance	Health and wellness	Banking
Lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)*	40%	38%	38%	37%
Lack of product fit	14%	28%	8%	12%
Lack of quality	14%	4%	23%	7%
Lack of sustainability	10%	-	-	-
Lack of value	9%	15%	15%	20%
Lack of convenience	9%	6%	8%	13%
Lack of trust	5%	5%	8%	11%
Lack of expertise	-	4%	-	-

  

	Beauty	Apparel	Restaurant	Grocery
Lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)*	36%	35%	24%	12%
Lack of product fit	9%	7%	11%	9%
Lack of quality	16%	14%	27%	25%
Lack of sustainability	13%	8%	4%	6%
Lack of value	9%	13%	20%	23%
Lack of convenience	13%	12%	7%	19%
Lack of trust	5%	11%	7%	6%
Lack of expertise	-	-	-	-

Note: \*Includes concerns about products and services that do not meet the needs of racial/ethnic groups or that do not address social inequities and inclusivity gaps in business ownership, marketing, and advertising  
 Source: McKinsey & Company, "Black consumers: Where to invest for equity," Dec 15, 2021

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When companies fail to understand the nuances of the experiences and expectations of their Black customers, they can end up making bland statements of support around holidays or take an action that backfires by betraying their lack of insight. For example, Bath & Body Works faced charges of cultural appropriation during Black History Month this year when it repackaged existing products—including watermelon-scented candles—in designs intended to represent traditional African art.

## What Can Brands Do?

To understand Black consumers, companies need to acknowledge and meet their discrete diversity, equity, and inclusion needs. First, they must recognize the way these needs manifest in a desire for other attributes, such as value, convenience, and quality. Second, companies should understand how these needs vary depending on the product or industry—and, importantly, on the social status of the customer. And third, they must tailor marketing strategies and solutions to appeal to these specific needs, incorporating tactics to drive long-term engagement.

[Read the full report.](#)