

# Brands increasingly see Black History Month as an opportunity to make long-term commitments over short-term sales

Article

**The trend:** With another **Black History Month** in the books, it's clear that while some brands miss the mark in the name of commercialism, others use it as an opportunity to foster connections with consumers who care about inclusivity and equity.

**Why it matters:** Black consumers' spending power is expected to surge **over 25%** between 2021 and 2026, outpacing the spending power of white consumers by nearly four points.

- More than six in 10 (61% of) of Black consumers—and nearly one-third of Americans—are likely to patronize Black-owned businesses in February, per Morning Consult data. They're also likely to patronize purpose-driven brands in general.

#### Attitudes Toward Purpose-Driven Brands According to US Black Consumers, Sep 2022

% of respondents

Buy from brands that support the black community	67%
Buy from brands that operate in a way that benefits society	64%
Buy from brands that are purpose-driven	64%
Am likely to defend a purpose-driven brand	63%
Try to buy exclusively from purpose-driven brands	51%

Note: ages 18-64; agree/strongly agree  
Source: My Code/B Code, "The Power of Values-Driven Marketing to Black Consumers,"  
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- Only **13%** of Americans frequently shop at Black-owned businesses, with four out of five Americans saying that the race and ethnicity of the owner doesn't affect their shopping decisions, per Morning Consult.
- Around **one-third** of Americans are aware of the Buy Black movement, despite an October 2021 McKinsey study finding that **45%** of Americans believe retailers should actively support Black-owned businesses—suggesting many shoppers are ready for change.
- These “inclusive consumers” want to purchase Black-owned brands but are often frustrated by their underrepresentation in stores: Despite 14.2% of the US population identifying as Black, Black-owned brands accounted for only 1.5% of total retail spending in 2020, generating \$83 billion in sales.

**The campaigns:** Various brands and retailers are celebrating Black History Month by spotlighting Black-owned businesses, donating to nonprofits that promote racial equity, and

creating exclusive collections and series that highlight Black artists' contributions to music and society. [Here are some of this year's most notable campaigns.](#)

**The pledge:** Major retailers including **Macy's**, **Sephora**, and **Nordstrom** increased their selection of Black-owned brands after committing to the Fifteen Percent Pledge. Sephora has doubled its selection, while Macy's had a fivefold increase in the Black-owned brands it carries. **Target** (which has not taken the pledge) plans to invest \$2 billion with Black-owned companies by 2025.

- The Fifteen Percent Pledge has attracted upward of 28 businesses, including some of the largest names in retail, and the group says that in its first year, nearly \$10 billion in sales accrued to Black-owned businesses.
- But it's difficult to calculate how much progress has resulted: The Pledge team notes that companies typically have Black-owned brands as less than 3% of their total shelf space when they join, but there's no public tracking toward that 15% target.

**Month-long to year-round:** Brands and retailers seem to be realizing customers want more long-term commitments to Black consumers and Black-owned brands rather than performative steps.

- **Best Buy** and **Walgreens** are using the RangeMe platform to discover a more diverse range of suppliers, with Best Buy having committed to spend at least \$1.2 billion with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) businesses by 2025.
- **Abercrombie & Fitch** has launched its "For Justice" [collection](#), designed by its own workforce. The collection features designs with the associates' own words promoting unity and equity. A portion of these sales go to **The Steve Fund**, which supports the mental health and well-being of people of color. It's a sharp contrast from the past, when the retailer was criticized for its lack of diversity in hiring and advertising.

**The big takeaway:** Black consumers and others who value inclusivity can be won over—but they want brands to take the long view. Getting a sale in February is great, but building customer relationships that last year-round is far more beneficial to the bottom line.