

MARKETING

US advertiser lobby ANA commits to racial equality in advertising and marketing

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ANA member Unilever's Ben & Jerry ice cream brand, typically vocal on social issues, was quite stark in its demand. Image credit: Ben & Jerry's

By STAFF REPORTS

The Association of National Advertisers and its Alliance for Inclusive & Multicultural Marketing (AIMM) arm admitted slow progress in all areas of diversity and inclusion as the United States grapples with angst over racial inequality and police brutality toward African Americans.

In a letter rich with commitments to do better, the nation's leading trade association representing advertisers said more has to be done to end systemic racism in the U.S., which also shows up in advertising and marketing spends that do not reflect the population's diversity.

"We will increase our spending in multicultural marketing so that the percentage of investment is commensurate with the representation of the multicultural people we serve," a letter from ANA/AIMM to its board of directors and members stated.

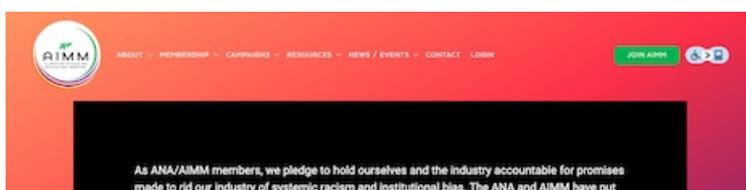
"Current findings from the PQ Media study highlight that only 5 percent of marketing spend is targeting multicultural segments, which is unacceptable, as it represents a mere fraction of the country's Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and LGBTQ+ populations."

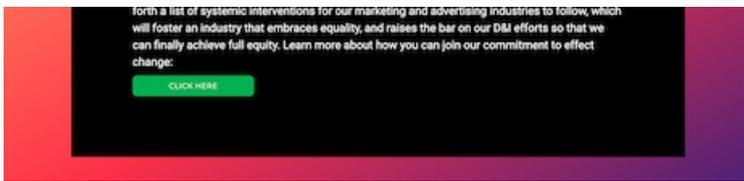
Protests against racial inequality and police brutality have been held across the U.S. As a result, many companies, organizations and governmental entities have vowed to change practices to be more inclusive and sensitive.

Some, such as the [ANA](#), will monitor their commitments.

"AIMM is developing an industry ranking system by which our marketing, D&I, investment, and advertising efforts will be measured," the ANA letter said.

"The ranking system will use the ANA/AIMM research previously conducted as a baseline for where the industry is today so that we can set goals to create change and track progress."





The ANA/AIMM Web site homepage. Image credit: ANA, AIMM

Below, in its entirety, is the letter from ANA and AIMM:

ANA/AIMM Commitment to Equality, Inclusion, and Systemic Change from America's Marketers, Media Companies, Agencies, Production Companies, and Service Providers

At ANA and AIMM, we strongly believe that every person regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion, age, or culture should have equal rights, equal representation, opportunities, support, understanding, respect, consideration, voice, and the ability to achieve their full potential. For more than 20 years, we have used our collective voices, reach, and commitment to create an industry that is more inclusive, understanding, and reflective of diverse segments. Although we have done a lot, it is not enough.

As we experience unprecedented loss due to the novel coronavirus, Black and Brown communities continue to face an age-old virus that has infected America for four centuries: racism. As America marches for an end to racism, injustice, and inequality against Blacks, the marketing and advertising industry is here to say we see you, we hear you, we are with you, and we commit to do everything in our individual and collective power to end systemic racism and achieve equality and justice.

As marketers and industry leaders, we commit to unflinchingly examining our own history and current practices to shine a light on systemic and institutional bias that exists within the industry. We can no longer accept the failings of many of our diversity and inclusion initiatives. We commit to examining why they fail and what action is needed to advance. And we commit to interventions that will have an immediate and sustained impact on equality, inclusion, and systemic change in our ecosystem and in our society:

- We will achieve representation that better reflects our country's demographics throughout the industry: marketers, media companies, agencies, production companies, and service providers. This means equity in representation at every level, equitable access, and equitable voice in other words, a seat at the table. In our yearly diversity reports to the industry, we will include clear actionable steps and guidelines for companies to achieve parity and extend that work to the balance of the industry.
- We will conduct courageous conversations and work with our membership's Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to understand the systemic inequities throughout the industry so that together we can establish programs that can fix these systems.
- We will accelerate the use of AIMM's #SeeALL campaign to eliminate bias through the accurate portrayal of race, identity, and culture in advertising and media programs. We will hold ourselves and the industry accountable by measuring all ads and programming in which we invest with AIMM's Cultural Insights Impact Measure (CIIM).
- We will increase our spending in multicultural marketing so that the percentage of investment is commensurate with the representation of the multicultural people we serve. Current findings from the PQ Media study highlight that only 5 percent of marketing spend is targeting multicultural segments, which is unacceptable, as it represents a mere fraction of the country's Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and LGBTQ+ populations.
- We will demand the accuracy of multicultural and inclusive data from measurement service providers so that marketers can connect with key diverse audiences and attribute growth to the right people and segments.
- We will continue to work until we achieve an equal and equitable creative supply chain through strategic investment in agencies, broadcasters, suppliers, and producers that are owned or run by Black, Hispanic, Asian, and LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities.
- We will double down on cross-industry partnerships to enable a higher degree of engagement with and understanding of diverse communities. We will leverage learnings from our supplier diversity study to help companies establish increased support of diverse suppliers.

As ANA/AIMM members, we pledge to hold ourselves and the industry accountable for promises made. We want to

ensure that we walk the walk not only while our country is suffering, but on a long-term basis where we have the power to create systemic change. For this reason, AIMM is developing an industry ranking system by which our marketing, D&I, investment, and advertising efforts will be measured. The ranking system will use the ANA/AIMM research previously conducted as a baseline for where the industry is today so that we can set goals to create change and track progress.

There is no greater urgency than that of addressing the systemic racism, injustice, and inequalities plaguing our country. We will use our platforms to ensure we use our resources and voices as a force for good and a force for change. To join the pledge for change, visit us at www.anaaimm.net. Your signature and participation have never been more important in the quest for equity than they are today.

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