

# The Weekly Digest

A single source for consumer sentiment, news, and resources related to what's happening in the country today

**February 17, 2021**

While coronavirus remains top of mind as the vaccine makes its way to more people, this week, we focus on Black History Month, an annual observance dedicated to honoring the achievements and contributions of African Americans throughout our nation's history. After a year of racial reckoning following the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer, consumers are calling for companies to truly engage in meaningful cultural exchange--championing Black people and culture--rather than performative activism. While 72% of Gen Z and Millennials say brands should have initiatives to commemorate Black History Month, 74% say that they should talk about diversity and anti-racism throughout the whole year. The best way, they say, for brands to celebrate the month is by amplifying the voices of

Black leaders, among other meaningful actions (see: Chart of the Day).

The same is also being demanded of companies celebrating Lunar New Year, an Asian holiday in February marking the beginning of a new year on the traditional Chinese calendar. Amidst a rise in anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes due to the COVID pandemic, consumers are weary of brands that come out with flashy campaigns versus those that bring about meaningful social change (see Spotlight On: How brands are engaging in Black History Month and Lunar New Year this year). Looking beyond just the month of February and engaging with these communities year-round is critical for businesses that want to take action and make a significant impact.

Number of COVID-19 Cases in the U.S.

**27,757,609**

Number of Daily New Diagnoses in the U.S.

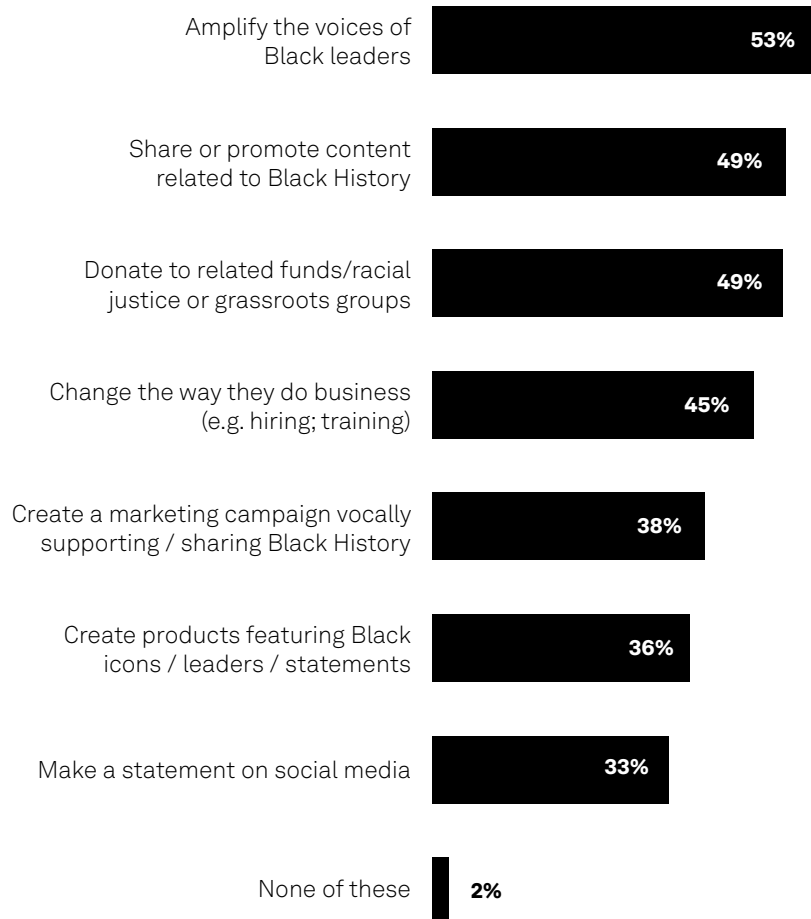
**62,228**

Trajectory of New Diagnoses:

**Decreasing**

As of 10:12am Source: [Johns Hopkins](#)

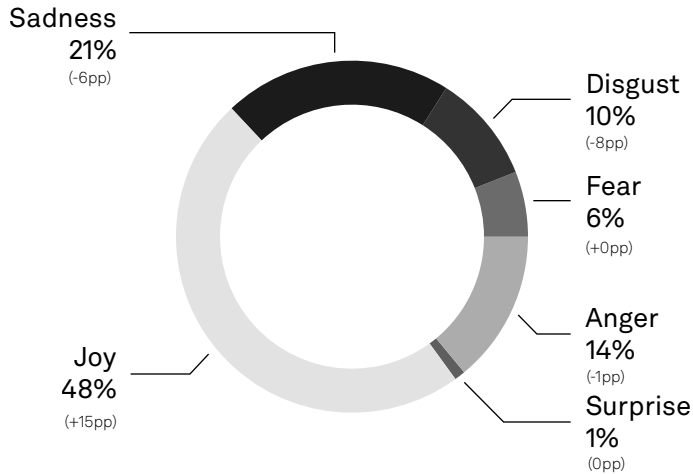
## What should brands do to celebrate/commemorate Black History Month?



## Consumer Discussions



## Emotional sentiment



Date: 2/10/21-2/16/21

Note: Change in emotional sentiment is reflective of changes since 6/10, when we shifted how social listening is being pulled to be reflective of all social conversations, rather than COVID-19-specific conversations.

## COVID-Related Resources

- See how the vaccine rollout is going in your state (2/14/21) [NYTimes](#)
- The U.S. COVID-19 vaccine rollout is getting faster. But is it enough? (2/12/21) [TIME](#)
- 'Right now feels so long and without any end in sight': More than 700 people have been keeping digital diaries (2/15/21) [NYTimes](#)
- Piecing together the next pandemic (2/16/21) [NYTimes](#)

## Racial-Justice-Related Resources


- 'Stop killing us': Attacks on Asian Americans highlight rise in hate incidents amid COVID-19 (2/11/21) [USA Today](#)
- For Asian Americans, sharing our grief is an act of revolution (2/17/21) [Elle](#)
- Amid rise in attacks against Asian Americans, Jeannie Mai calls for intersectional, anti-racist action (2/12/21) [Forbes](#)
- Report a hate incident against Asian American Pacific Islanders at [stopaapihate.org](#)
- A Black history tribute: 'Thank you for leading the way' (2/15/21) [Complex](#)
- 5 new films to watch during Black History Month (2/9/21) [AARP](#)
- The problem with mandatory patriotism in sports (2/14/21) [The Atlantic](#)


### Joy

 **KendraEevee (Kendra the Shiny Eevee)** @KendraEevee 18h  
Oh my god! I just got informed that my roommate and I are eligible for Covid vaccines! Yay! My parents are glad about it, too!

 **ParissAthena (Pariss Athena | Founder of Black Tech Pipeline)** @ParissAthena 15 Feb  
Did my first COVID test - came back negative. Yay.

### Anger

 **ccarman602 (Chris Carman)** @ccarman602 10 Feb  
RT @Dr2NisreenAlwan 'Caution' doesn't mean just hand gel. It means acknowledging the airborne transmission of covid and resourcing schools to have radical ventilation and distancing solutions so that they don't close again. So tired of saying this and feel it's pointless but saying it anyway 😞


 **\_yaminah (Yaminah)** @\_yaminah 15 Feb  
RT @LiIRedRooster I was telling someone the other day that I can count on less than two hands the number of COVID patients who made it out of the ICU and had meaningful recoveries on the last year, and they said I had to be lying or just not remembering things correctly. Okay.


### Fear

 **ruthellaowens (RUTH ELLA OWENS)** @ruthellaowens 12 Feb  
RT @InsideEdition The #YearOfTheOx begins with the #ChineseNewYear on Friday, but for many Asian Americans, this year's holiday is marked by anxiety and unease, a stark contrast to the usually hopeful attitudes for luck and prosperity. 📺 by @johannacli: <https://t.co/mEgogUOKJB>

 **PotterclawARMY (JoonNeverWalkAlone)** @PotterclawARMY 10 Feb  
RT @mayleechai Attacks against Asian Americans is as old as America itself but the sheer volume and number have gone up astronomically since the COVID panic. Here's a few examples: 1) 84 Thai grandfather shoved and killed last week in SF <https://t.co/1On9BUIHU2> 1)

### Sadness

 **DrHowardLiu (Howard Liu, MD MBA)** @DrHowardLiu 14 Feb  
RT @AbidiMaheen Incredibly thoughtful. My heart goes out to all those children who lost a parent during covid. That was the tragedy of the first surge, seeing families wiped out.

 **deviousggplant (Boo Boo Thee Fool)** @deviousggplant 13 Feb  
RT @Corpus\_Christ LMAO texas gonna shut down longer for cold weather than it did for COVID 🙄🙄🙄

### Disgust

 **mareyamusic (Turiya Mareya)** @mareyamusic 10 Feb  
RT @CoriBush COVID-19 is disproportionately killing Black, brown, and Indigenous people. The vaccine rollout program is disproportionately favoring white people. This is structural racism in action.

 **badapplerose (R O S E)** @badapplerose 13 Feb  
If you're going to use an Asian holiday for clout or likes, then at least acknowledge the racism, discrimination, and hate crimes in the Asian-American community, which has increased since COVID.

## Spotlight On: How brands are engaging in Black History Month and Lunar New Year this year

This month, many brands have shown their support for both Black History Month and Lunar New Year with new initiatives and product drops. While some brands have missed the mark, others have been more successful, particularly those that have included partnerships with individuals/organizations from the Black and Asian communities themselves. Brands' celebration of these two historical and cultural events raises long-standing questions about the co-opting of cultural and ethnic traditions and whether mainstream recognition can bring about positive social change for these communities. Here are a few examples of brands that have meaningfully engaged in these celebrations:

### Black History Month:

- Gap launched a [campaign](#), 'I Am Black And', created by Black artists and designers and committed to \$200,000 to the 15 Percent Pledge, a non-profit that calls on major retailers to pledge 15% of their shelf space to Black-owned businesses.
- [Under Armour](#) partnered with Baltimore photographer and activist Devin Allen who photographed young Black athletes in UA's new collection of shoes and apparel.

### Lunar New Year:

- [McDonald's](#) partnered with 88rising, a global Asian artist collective, to roll out Lunar New Year digital experiences, including giving away digital red envelopes, producing an IGTV mini-series with Korean hip hop artist and actor Dumbfoundead, and throwing a virtual mini-concert featuring Chinese hip-hop artist Masiwei.
- [Sephora Canada](#) launched a Lunar New Year campaign with Canadian influencers Brigitte Truong and Angel Zheng. The campaign features meaningful moments of cross-cultural exchange that highlight different values and traditions behind the holiday.
- Nike's 2020 [ad](#) depicting the red envelope tug-of-war between family members was widely praised for raising the public's understanding of the Lunar New Year tradition.

Source: [Global News](#) (2/14/21), [NBC News](#) (2/12/21), [Washington Post](#) (2/5/21)

## Marketing/Media News Related to COVID-19

- Visualizing America's entrepreneurial spirit during COVID-19 (2/15/21) [Visual Capitalist](#)
- The rise, fall and resonance of ESPN Esports (2/16/21) [Washington Post](#)
- Real-life couples reconnect in Diesel's COVID-era campaign (2/16/21) [AdWeek](#)
- Disney World extends hours for first week of March (2/14/21) [Fox Business](#)
- Focus Brands to provide 4 hours of PTO for COVID vaccinations (2/16/21) [QSR Magazine](#)
- These companies are paying employees to get vaccinated (2/12/21) [AARP](#)
- Taco Bell owner Yum Brands earnings top estimates, despite blow of international COVID restrictions (2/4/21) [CNBC](#)

## Marketing/Media News Related to Racial Injustice

- Brand marketers stick to trust-building strategies forged in 2020's fires, study finds (2/16/21) [Marketing Dive](#)
- Asian-American restaurant owners campaigning against anti-Asian hate crimes (2/15/21) [Fox Business](#)
- Branding challenges follow Aunt Jemima becoming Pearl (2/16/21) [Chicago Business](#)
- VF Corporation announces new programs and actions to advance racial equity (2/11/21) [BusinessWire](#)
- Here's where beauty stands in its progress toward racial equity (2/12/21) [WWD](#)
- How brands can sustain Black Lives Matter in 2021 (2/10/21) [PRovoke](#)
- 'It has to be ongoing': Brands' social support for racial justice has tapered off (2/2/21) [Glossy](#)

## Economic News

- Lower-income COVID-19 aid recipients seen boosting consumer spending (2/14/21) [WSJ](#)
- Visualizing how COVID-19 has impacted global wages (2/16/21) [Visual Capitalist](#)
- A pandemic paradox: American credit scores continue to rise as economy struggles—here's why (2/16/21) [MarketWatch](#)
- Demand for second homes demonstrates K-shaped recovery (2/9/21) [MReport](#)
- Why Carnival Corporation, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian Cruise Line stocks are all surging today (2/16/21) [The Motley Fool](#)

For a regularly updated blog tracking brands' responses to racial injustice, visit AdAge [here](#)