

# BLACK AUDIENCE CREATIVE BRIEF

## BACKGROUND

The [Ad Council](#) and [COVID Collaborative](#) are leading a massive communications effort to educate the American public and build confidence around the COVID-19 vaccines.

Guided by the leading minds in health and medicine and fueled by the best talent in the private sector, the COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative is designed to reach different audiences, including communities of color who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

## AUDIENCE GOAL

Reduce vaccine hesitancy amongst Black Americans by empowering people to get the answers they need, overcome myths and misinformation, and make an informed decision to protect themselves and their loved ones.

- Only 40% of Black Americans feel confident they know enough to guide their decision about getting a COVID-19 vaccine, significantly lower than the general population.
- Various surveys and research reveal that many Black Americans report they will not get the vaccine or have questions.

## AUDIENCE ROOTS OF HESITANCY<sup>1</sup>

- Concerns about **safety and side effects** from COVID-19 vaccination, driven by the speed of the clinical development process and the vaccines' novelty.
- Lack of **knowledge**.
- **Distrust** in the **political and economic motives** of the government and corporations.

## HESITANT BLACK COMMUNITY<sup>1 2</sup>

<b>Demographic skews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher hesitancy among Black women</li> <li>• More likely to be employed as an essential worker</li> <li>• Less likely to have access to high quality healthcare</li> </ul>
<b>Psychographic skews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less likely to trust in government</li> <li>• More likely to be suspicious of being 'guinea pigs'</li> </ul>
<b>Unique concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distrust is especially salient in the Black community because of medical and government mistreatment (e.g. Tuskegee study) that has contributed to cultural trauma.</li> <li>• Black Americans tend to question just how open, diverse, and transparent vaccines conversations will be as they often feel excluded from other health-related discussions.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>National survey conducted via IPSOS; December 15-21, 2020 | n=1,992 adults 18+

<sup>2</sup>Qualitative interviews conducted via Ahuzl Research; December 8-18, 2020 | n=26 adults 25-60

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## MEDIA CONSUMPTION INSIGHTS

While we want to reach Black communities broadly, we know there are differences in hesitancy levels, and media consumption and trusted channels by age. As a result, our media approach will focus on two core age groups within the Black community, Adults 45+ & Adults 18-44.

## GUIDING MESSAGING PRINCIPLES

- Lead with empathy and respect that people have real questions or concerns.
- Position vaccines as a way to help people protect themselves and their loved ones.
- Respect people's independence and urge them to make an informed decision.
- Gain trust by being honest and transparent where appropriate.
- Pair the rational information with the emotional side of the moments we all miss.
- Welcome people's questions, and point them to the latest clear information.
- In visuals and photography, balance the "moments we miss" with showing realistic scenarios. Masks and protective measures will still be needed as vaccines roll out.
  - o Do use masks in visuals of public settings understood to be the present day.
  - o People shown with those outside of their immediate family should be wearing masks.
  - o It's important that we don't suggest that having the vaccine is a way to get out wearing a mask and maintaining social distance.
  - o When flashing back to pre-COVID, or clearly showing moments in the distant future, masks aren't necessary. It's important to include clear references to passage of time.
- Specific Black audience creative insights<sup>2</sup>
  - o For Black Americans, the definition of community tends to be smaller—neighborhoods, churches, schools—vs. at national level.
  - o Be careful of singling out Black communities and/or depicting responsibility for vaccination to be resting on their shoulders—creative should include diverse audiences.
  - o Black Americans are more likely motivated by messages that talk about helping vulnerable populations by getting the vaccine.

<sup>2</sup>Qualitative interviews conducted via Ahuzl Research; December 8-18, 2020 | n=26 adults 25-60

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## CREATIVE PLATFORM

**It's Up to You** is a simple idea that can inspire brilliant executions. It's a framework that allows for independent, yet integrated communications efforts. We believe that uniting under this open-source creative concept will strengthen the key communications message and inspire people to learn more about COVID-19 vaccines.



- CTA: Visit [GetVaccineAnswers.org](https://GetVaccineAnswers.org) for all the latest information.
- URL: [GetVaccineAnswers.org](https://GetVaccineAnswers.org)
- Platform engages with current mindset, highlights social connections, and gives people a personal choice to make an informed decision.

### MESSAGES TO AVOID

- Negativity, fear, and reminders of how difficult the pandemic has been.
- Positioning getting a vaccine as “the right thing to do.”
- Overpromising that getting a vaccine will “flip the switch” and end the pandemic immediately.
- Using “back to normal” when things will never be normal for so many people – focus on “back to life” or “back to the moments we miss” as most compelling.

### TRUSTED MESSENGERS<sup>3</sup>

- **Medical experts and community health providers** are generally the most trusted sources. A call to action to “get vaccinated” is best to only come from these sources.
  - o However, Black Americans are less likely to be influenced by their doctor, public health experts, and healthcare providers in getting the vaccine compared to the general population.
- **Word of mouth** is important to build a cultural consensus, but people don't necessarily trust their **friends and family** when it comes to the facts of COVID-19 vaccination.
  - o Black Americans are more receptive to messages from faith-based leaders compared to the general population.
- **Celebrities** can be useful to amplify support or when they give a platform to medical experts to help share educational information (but stay away from celebrities telling people what to do).
- **Institutions** like CDC still carry credibility, but it can be just as effective to focus on trusted medical experts. Faith in government and the pharmaceutical industry is generally low right now.

<sup>3</sup>National survey conducted via IPSOS; December 15-21, 2020 | n=1,038; vaccine hesitant adults