

# Race *in the* Workplace

*Zoom in partnership with TIME for Learning invited **Shaun Harper**, one of the world's leading racial equity experts, to join Zoom's Chief Diversity Officer **Damien Hooper-Campbell** for a multi-part series focused on practical approaches to improving and advancing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in organizations.*

For many leaders, tackling race in the workplace is challenging, and so they have historically chosen avoidance as their primary strategy. Many executives have little to no personal and professional experience talking about racism, and are afraid of being naïve, making mistakes that make them seem insensitive, or worse, racist.

But since the recent murders of many Black people, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, avoidance is no longer an option. The issues of police brutality in Black communities, structural and systemic racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy, as well as inaction on long-standing racial problems have come to the fore, and corporations have felt compelled to make internal and external statements stating that they are anti-racist and that Black lives matter.

However, these statements have to be more than just words in a moment of crisis. This can't be a moment, it must be a movement that leads to long-term, demonstrable progress on racial equity goals, and increased value on the lives and professional contributions of people of color in the workplace.

*This document will summarize the key takeaways from each episode. To watch or learn more about the other episodes in the series, please visit [time.com/raceintheworkplace](https://time.com/raceintheworkplace).*

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## Essential Takeaways: Episode 5

### Holding Managers Accountable for Diversity and Inclusion Goals

Oftentimes, people of color are overrepresented in the lowest paid, least powerful roles — and are underrepresented in mid-level management and senior leadership positions. This episode of Race in the Workplace offers strategies to invest in and advance the careers of employees of color throughout your organization.

Many companies proudly articulate their commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and spend time developing EDI goals. In this episode, Shaun Harper delves into how to move past good intentions and actually hold managers and executives accountable for following through on these ideas to drive equity in the workplace. He shares concrete tactics to empower managers and evaluate their contributions to the advancement of these goals.

In June, Harper wrote an article as a response to the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, having been moved by seeing people of all races and generations march together in unity for the Black Lives Matter movement. While he found it inspirational, he did want to highlight some contradictions.

Harper offers a story about a senior leader, Chuck, in a corporation, where Black executives have quit under his tenure, leaving only a few Black administrative assistants. Chuck is known for treating the Black administrative assistants badly, refusing to recruit a highly qualified Black woman who is a leader in the industry, asking a Black colleague for special permission to use the n-word, and other actions that Black employees have found harmful. All the Black employees are shocked when he jumps on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) bandwagon and sends a company-wide email denouncing racism and flaunts his support in a BLM rally.

This story sets the context for how to think about personal accountability.

### 7 Reflective Personal Accountability Questions

1. **Am I anything like Chuck?** The natural inclination is to think of ourselves as good and committed to EDI. But, how can you be certain? How do you know you are not like Chuck?
2. **What do I consistently do to affirm that Black lives matter**—both personally and with my team? What do I do in my everyday interactions with Black people in my company to show that they matter in our workplace?

3. **Who ACTUALLY holds me accountable for ensuring a commitment to EDI?** Do they really hold me accountable, or is it just lip service?
4. **Does the composition of my team reflect my commitment to people of color?** It is important to make sure that employees of color are not concentrated in the lowest levels of the organization.
5. **What would my colleagues of color say about my commitment to EDI?** It is really important to not just think about the one or two people of color on your team but to understand how you are perceived by other employees of color within your company.
6. **How do I contribute to (or undermine) the advancement of our company's EDI efforts?** What are my strategic actions? What are my contributions to these goals?
7. **How much time do I spend with people of color outside of work?** If you have relationships outside of the workplace with people of color, you can use those experiences to teach you how to bring EDI to the workplace.

### ***How to Ascertain an Organization's Commitment to EDI Goals***

The seven questions above are based on personal reflection, but now we delve into ways to determine the level of commitment an organization has to its EDI goals by asking the following:

- **Are EDI goals included in performance appraisals?** What is really important to a company is listed on annual employee evaluations—are EDI goals on there?
- **Has anyone ever been fired for not hitting the company's EDI goals?** Not necessarily for overt racist actions (of course, those would be good reasons for termination), but has anyone been let go for not meeting EDI expectations?
- **Outside of firing, what are the other consequences of not meeting EDI goals?** If you are serious about your EDI goals, there must be serious consequences if they are not met. Does this happen in your organization?
- **Is EDI deemed as important as other parts of the business** (finance, sales, marketing, IT, etc.)? Are EDI efforts as well staffed, understood, and integrated into the company as these other arms of the organization?

### ***7 Approaches to Holding Managers Accountable***

1. **Include EDI goal-markers in year-over-year performance evaluations** of managers and executives.
2. **Include the manager's teams in the evaluation** as well. Require documented evidence of how each member is contributing to the company's EDI goals.
3. **Report EDI performance quarterly** the same way you report on other business function metrics. Managers must provide quantitative metrics.
4. **Demonstrate qualitative evidence of serious contributions.** Expect managers or leaders to narrate examples of how they have contributed and share this with upper management and all different levels of the company.
5. **Make data transparent.** It's not just about retelling inspiring stories of good programs and activities that include diversity and inclusion. You must show the numbers. If there are all-white teams, you have to know that. If there are teams that are more diverse, you have to know that. This may inspire leaders to do better knowing that their EDI performance will be seen by the entire company.
6. **Require managers to develop improvement plans.** Consider an EDI coach because so many managers need it.
7. **Make sure managers know there are serious consequences** if they fail to meet the EDI goals of the company.

## ***5 Ways to Incentivize Commitment to EDI Goals***

1. Award deserving bonuses.
2. Increase budgets of those units and teams, making it easier to meet EDI goals.
3. Increase headcount for successfully hiring people of color.
4. Showcase EDI successes internally and externally.
5. Develop competition between business units. Accelerate the EDI progress of the highest performing units.

*Let's not stop now. Check out more info and takeaways from additional episodes of the Race in the Workplace series, in partnership with Zoom and TIME for Learning at [time.com/raceintheworkplace](https://time.com/raceintheworkplace).*