

2023 SJR DIVERSITY, EQUITY & BELONGING REPORT



A WPP COMPANY

MARCH 15, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Belonging. It's defined as an affinity for a place or a situation. At SJR, we believe that belonging creates a sense of connection. In our daily work as storytellers, we connect brands and their messages to audiences with the aim of transforming minds, shaping decisions, and capturing human experiences.

Building connections – and belonging – within our company is paramount. It's a key part of our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategy. At a time when many companies are abandoning their DEI investments, we remain steadfast in creating a culture where our people can see, hear, and empathize with one another. And when our talented colleagues feel like they belong, they can do their best work.

At SJR, we are guided by a series of commitments to help us foster a culture in which all employees can be their authentic selves. We

have the best people, and so we pledge to continue recruiting a diverse and representative group of individuals. We also know that we are at our best when everyone is valued, respected, heard, and understood. We feel deeply about this, and that's why we make space to honor and celebrate the culture and lived experiences of our staff.

We're also supporting our employees' career goals by increasing our efforts to offer equitable growth opportunities and empower them with access to resources and programs. We are finding more instances to share our talents, time, and resources with our local communities. And we are partnering with our clients to help them achieve their DEI goals by accessing our bench of editors, creatives, and strategists, who are intentional in bringing inclusive principles to their work.

This annual report reinforces our vision and commitment to

diversity, equity and *belonging* (DE&B) – holding us accountable so we can continue building an environment where our colleagues feel supported, represented, and celebrated. It allows us to reflect on the work we've done and plan for the journey ahead. We take our values seriously, and it's important that everyone feels like they belong at SJR.



WE KNOW THAT WE ARE AT OUR BEST WHEN EVERYONE IS VALUED, RESPECTED, HEARD, AND UNDERSTOOD.

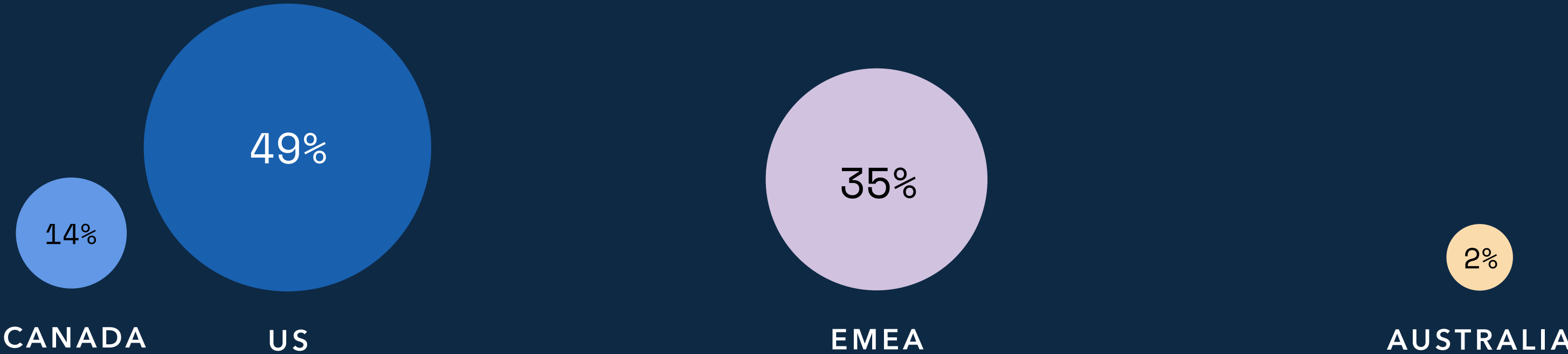
– Caroline Clouse, member, Global DE&B Committee

OUR PEOPLE

SJR is a community of individuals in five offices with headquarters across three continents.

We aspire to create a culture where everyone feels safe, supported, and seen. We developed this report to improve transparency and hold ourselves accountable as we seek to increase representation across all levels of the organization. In 2023, we leveraged our quarterly reports to provide strategic direction on areas where we needed to focus our efforts. Demographic data is collected via voluntary employee self-identification in BambooHR, our employee engagement platform, and includes age, gender, race/ethnicity, military status, and disability status.

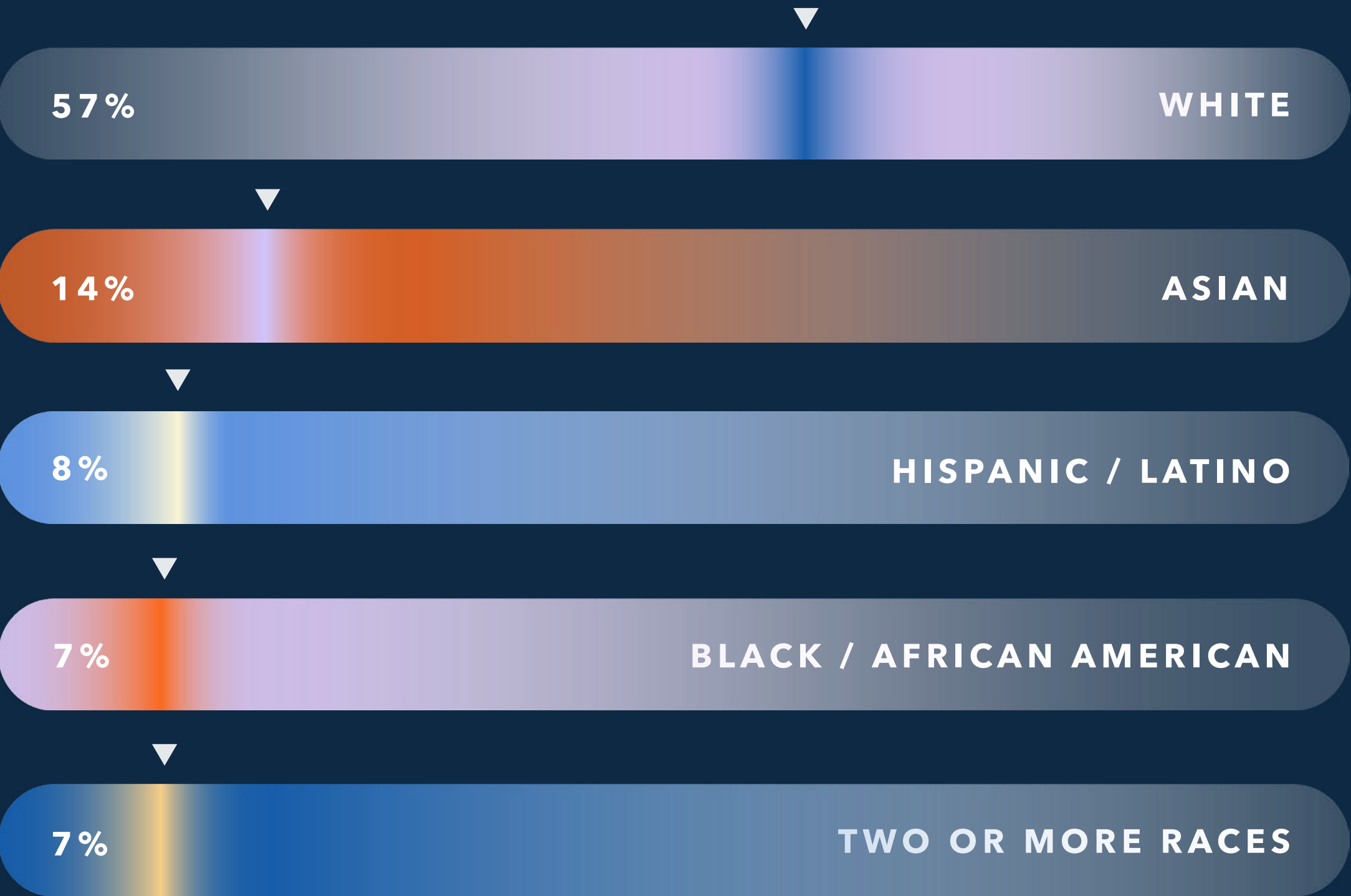
Our parent company, WPP, published workforce diversity data in its 2022 Sustainability Report. Aligned with WPP, SJR strives for gender parity at all levels of our business and to advance racial equity. Between 2022 and 2023, SJR saw a decrease in its staff because of the economic downturn. Despite these circumstances, we continue to prioritize representation among our staff.



GLOBAL EMPLOYEES BY PERCENT

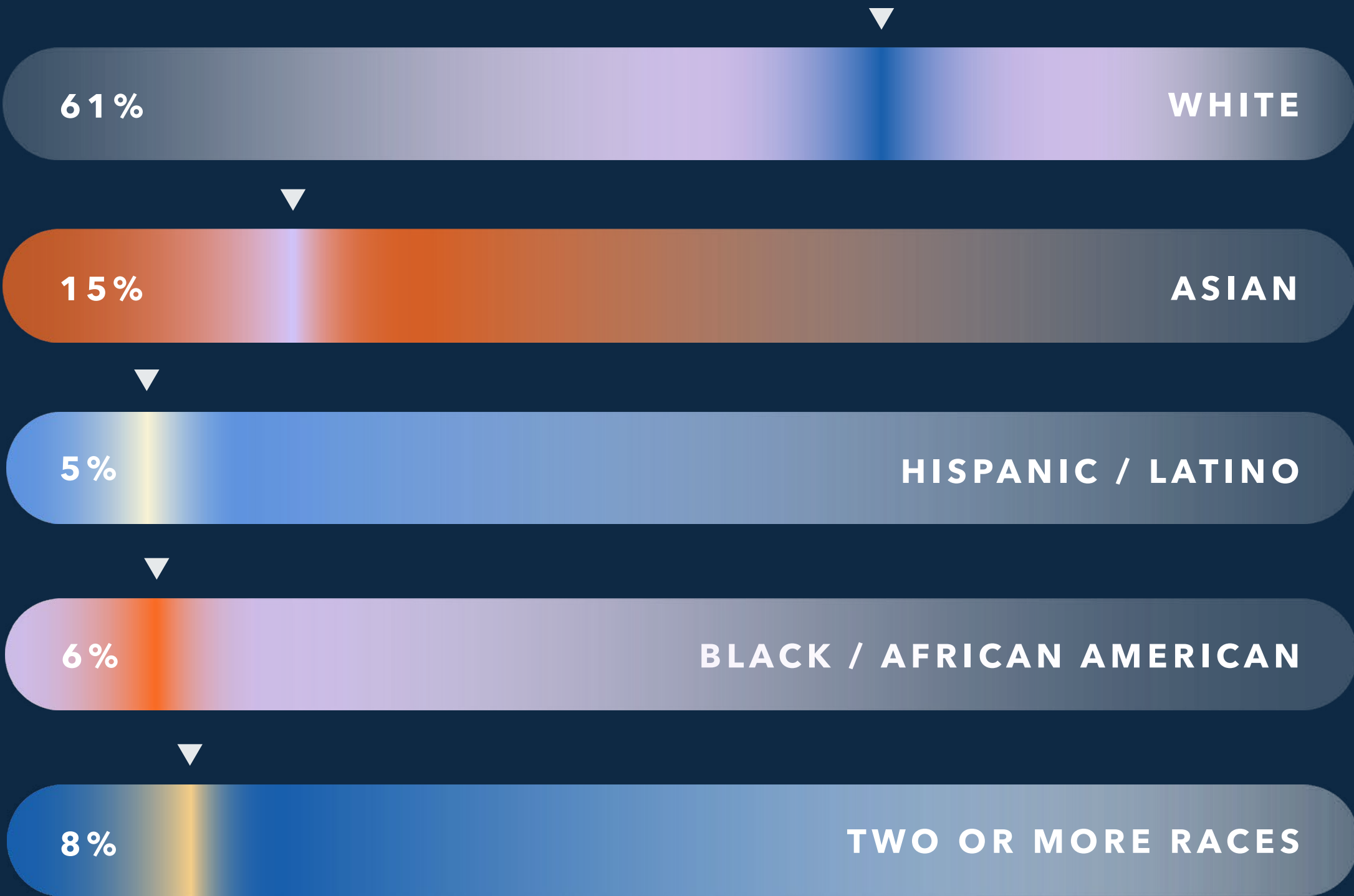
Of our workforce who self-identified in 2023, 34% were BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) or another ethnic minority – a decrease of 2 percentage points year-over-year. We’re still working toward our goal to increase our BIPOC/ethnic minority representation to 41% by 2025.

WORKFORCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY (GLOBAL) FOR 2022



7% of the workforce chose to not disclose their race and ethnicity.

WORKFORCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY (GLOBAL) FOR 2023



5% of our workforce chose to not disclose their race and ethnicity.

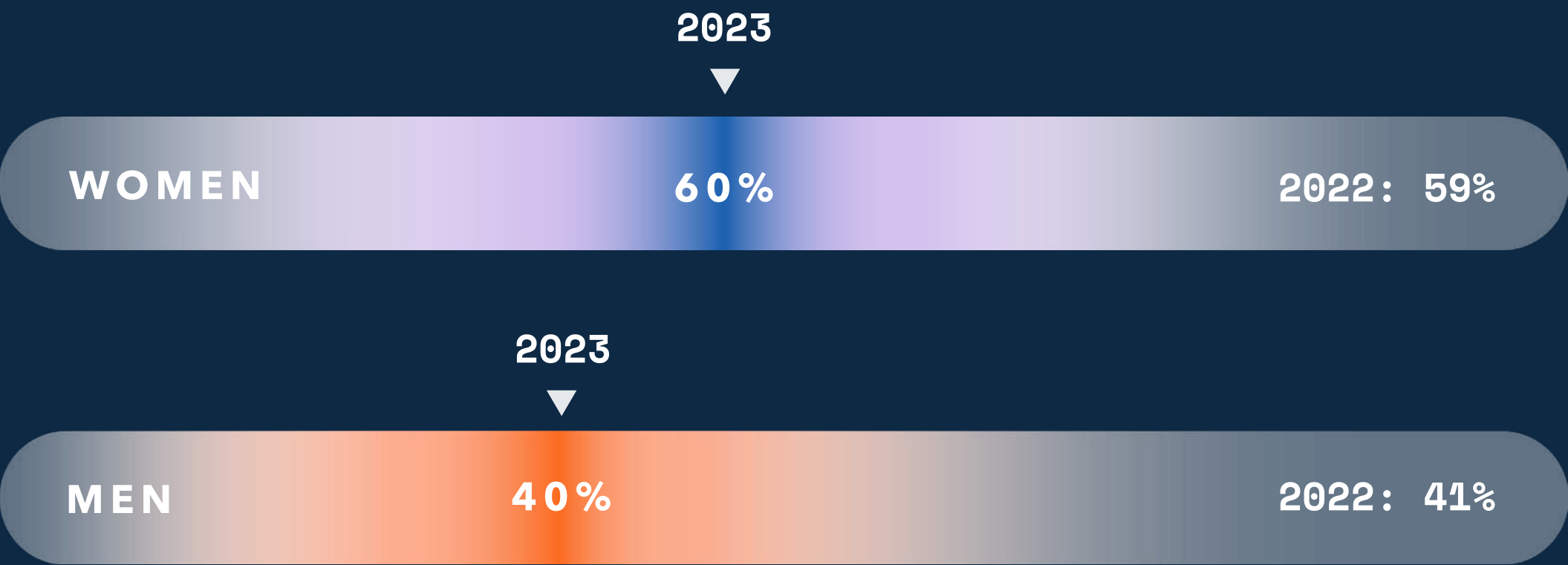
“
YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO PUT IN
THE WORK TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT
WHERE EVERYONE CAN THRIVE AND FEEL
LIKE THERE’S SPACE FOR THEM.”

– Christina Joseph Robinson, chair, Global DE&B Committee



SJR thrives – and our work is elevated – when our people bring their unique voices and insights to the table. In 2024, we are actively recruiting more-diverse candidates across underrepresented backgrounds (including BIPOC/ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ persons, individuals of differing ability and socioeconomic levels, and veterans). Our Global Diversity, Equity, and Belonging (DE&B) committee is aligned on this goal, and our People team is developing a framework to recruit, retain, and build the most talented team.

Our representation of women at SJR remains robust and slightly increased year-over-year – 60% of all employees globally.



“
OUR WORKFORCE SHOULD BE REFLECTIVE
OF THE GLOBAL SOCIETY WE OPERATE IN,
AND IT’S IMPORTANT WE BE TRANSPARENT
ABOUT OUR DE&B JOURNEY SO WE CAN
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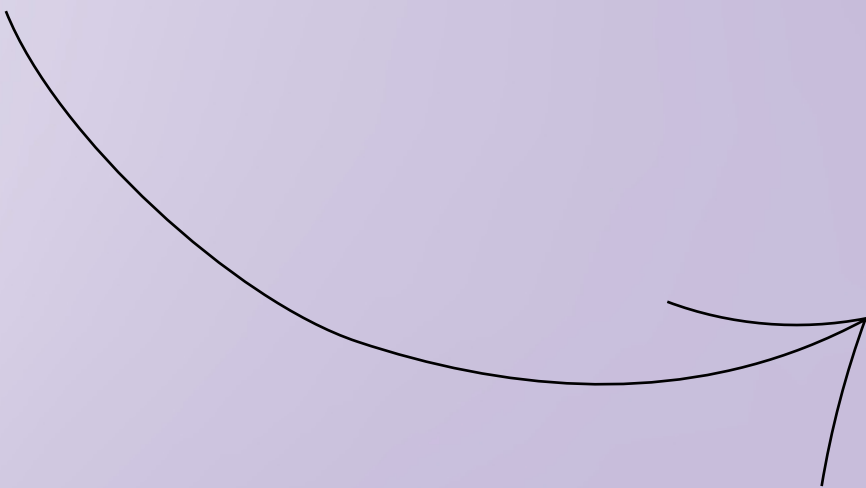
– Selena Cameron, Global CEO, SJR



OUR BELIEFS

At SJR, our goal is to invest in our people so they can do their best work. We believe everyone deserves an opportunity to thrive in an environment that helps them reach their full potential. That's why DE&B must be the foundation of our culture and embedded in everything we do. Our collective efforts must be intentional, strategic, and long term.

We hold ourselves accountable to our commitments and four key pillars: recruitment, retention & culture, community outreach, and client engagement.



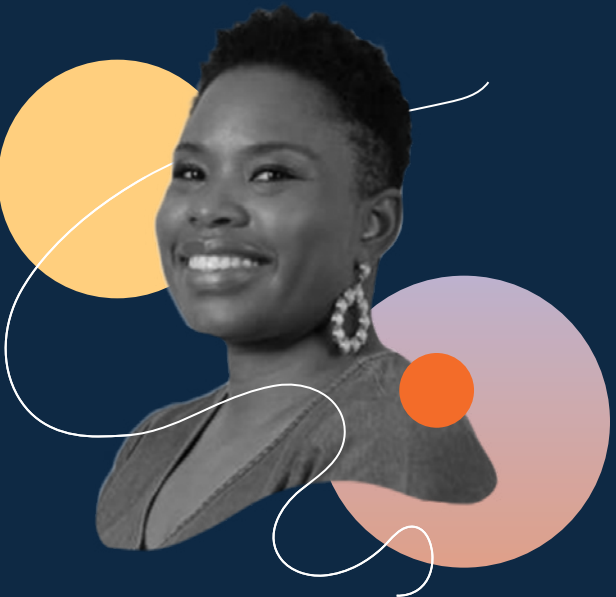
OUR EXPERIENCES

When we say SJR has the best people, we mean it. Our employees bring a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and identities – fueling a hub of creativity and innovation where exceptional work thrives. And we celebrate them by creating a space where they can show up as their authentic selves every day. Belonging means building connections through our communications, regional and global gatherings, cultural competency, and policies.



“In June, SJR New York participated in Letters to SAGE for Pride Month. It reminded me of doing arts and crafts in school; so, it was FUN! It was also meaningful knowing that we were sending messages of hope, appreciation, and connection to LGBTQ+ elder pioneers in our community. And doing this alongside some of the best people in our office was simply icing on the cake.”

– Erwin Araño, Global Compliance Director



“In August 2023 SJR London encouraged staff to donate food and hygiene products to a local food bank supported by the Trussell Trust. I organized the initiative and personally delivered the donations to the food bank with my colleague Mina. I don’t think I’ll ever forget how grateful the volunteer at the food bank was to receive our donations. Since then I’ve donated to food banks more local to me.”

– Jamila Jennings-Grant, Operations Manager, UK



“I’m proud to call SJR my workplace—especially how SJR actively plays a part in creating a culture that is inclusive, diverse and continues to improve in the DE&B space. Our DE&B Committee truly listens and finds creative ways to share meaningful lessons that are authentic, sensitive and rich in culture and history. They created thoughtful and consistent DE&B storytelling year-round. Kudos!”

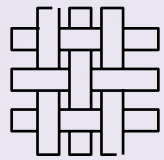
– Drydon Chow, Account Director, Canada

OUR COLLEAGUES ARE ALL IN

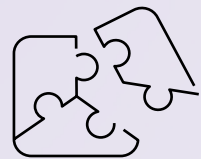
The employee experience is a critical part of establishing a culture where everyone feels like they belong. That's why it's important to listen to what our employees are saying. It allows us to find new ways to support and empower them while also holding ourselves accountable.

In September, WPP conducted its second annual All In Survey. One area of focus involved how staff members feel about the culture of their individual agencies. Employees were asked several questions about inclusion, belonging, psychological safety, and ability to contribute. Results were reported in two categories: DEI Index and Inclusion & Belonging.

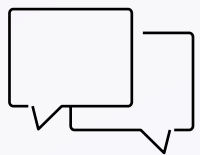
Overall, our employees believe we are doing well on the DEI Index, and we scored above average on Inclusion & Belonging. We plan to use this data to inform our recruitment and retention strategies.



"I feel like I really belong."



"Agency/company hires people with diverse backgrounds."



"Perspectives like mine are valued in decision-making."



"I can be my authentic self without fear of discrimination."

OUR PILLARS AT WORK IN EACH REGION

SJR is a global organization, but to build inclusion, we need to start one person, one office, one region at a time. It's important that our colleagues across our organization feel connected to one another and their local communities. We believe that helps build relationships, foster collaboration, encourage growth, and stimulate creativity.



CANADA

LEARNING AND GROWING

Our regional committee executed a survey to identify seasonal moments to celebrate, learn, and grow. Each week, DE&B Toronto shares compelling copy and impactful visuals about culturally significant Canadian events and people with the team. This has fostered discussion and engagement among the team. A low-cost initiative, the team researches, writes, and shares a creative digital postcard on our Toronto Teams channel.

Our lunch-and-learn-style events yielded high participation rates and engagement. These small, immersive gatherings with interactive quizzes, snacks/ traditional food items and décor allowed the team to learn about their colleagues. In 2023, we celebrated the Lunar New Year (January), Eid (April), and Diwali (November). And to commemorate

Truth & Reconciliation, the team visited the Art Gallery of Ontario for a guided tour of the Indigenous Collection, immersing ourselves in the more than 5,000 works by Canada’s First Nations, Intuit, and Metis artists.

SUPPORTING OUR CLIENTS

SJR Canada new hires were 63% female representation, 63% BIPOC. We value our partnerships with our clients and assist them with their goals to advance inclusion. We worked with RBC to support the first annual Legacy Awards pre-party hosted by the Black Academy benefitting Black filmmakers and actors in Canada.

EMBRACING OUR COMMUNITY

To foster belonging and allyship in our community, we hosted our first-ever clothing drive benefiting the 2SLGBTQ+ community and donated to Covenant House and

YMCA Sprott House in Toronto and Project 10 in Montreal. The team also visited to oldest Queer bookstore in Toronto.

MAINTAINING A DIVERSE PIPELINE

We remained steadfast in our efforts to continue recruiting from a diverse pool of talent – both in experience and ethnicity. SJR Canada new hires were 63% female representation, 63% BIPOC.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PINK



PRIDE CLOTHING DRIVE



MUSEUM FIELD TRIP



DIWALI

UNITED KINGDOM

CASTING A WIDER NET

In the UK, we have focused on continuing to recruit from a diverse candidate pool, developing relationships with specialist agencies that provide candidates from diverse backgrounds. We also aim to build a pipeline of younger talent by reaching out to Brixton Finishing School to solicit interns. This helps reinforce SJR's culture as an inclusive employer and engender a feeling of belonging for all.

BUILDING UNDERSTANDING

We delivered an inclusive calendar of events and activities with high engagement and positive feedback. For example, as part of Disability Pride Month and World Menopause Day, we encouraged team members to share their differences and experiences. This enabled a better understanding of the day-to-day challenges experienced by team members and helped ignite

conversations with colleagues. Our team also offered reflections about inspirational figures during Women's History Month, gathered for breakfast, and participated in quizzes to learn more about their coworkers. And for Men's Mental Health Month, some of our male employees shared stories of their struggles and triumphs.

LENDING A HELPING HAND

Our community initiatives garnered large participation. Employees volunteered with London Bankside to landscape and build a community shed, and they helped package and label cards for donations to homeless charities for StreetSmart. They also donated time, money, food, and supplies to Macmillan Cancer Support, the Trussell Trust food bank, and Salvation Army, respectively. And team members were given time off to volunteer as college mentors and mentors for the WPP Visible Start initiative.

HOLIDAY PARTY



TRUSSELL TRUST FOOD BANK DONATIONS



SALVATION ARMY XMAS TOY DRIVE DONATION



SECRET SANTA

UNITED STATES

ENSURING AN INCLUSIVE HIRING PROCESS

To honor our commitment to building a diverse pipeline of talent, we have partnered with WPP in updating the language in our job postings to highlight our inclusivity efforts and follow state transparency laws. We have also worked closely with all hiring managers to create a more cohesive hiring process.

BUILDING AWARENESS

As we continue to build community among a remote and hybrid staff, we organized several gatherings geared to increase employee engagement and build awareness of one another's cultures. Several SJR employees rang in the Year of the Rabbit by attending the WPP Lunar New Year calligraphy class, where they learned how to write and pronounce "2023," "Happy Lunar New Year," the different zodiac animals, and their Chinese zodiac

signs. During Hispanic Heritage Month, we collaborated with a sister agency for an Interagency Career Panel featuring leaders from the Latine community. And to commemorate World Mental Health Day, we assembled a one-sheet of mental health resources for all U.S. employees to easily access care.

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

Our U.S. team also rallied behind several community groups. We raised nearly \$2,000 for City Harvest's Share Lunch Fight Hunger campaign, an organization that helps fight food insecurity in New York. For Pride Month, we hosted an initiative to benefit SAGE, a national advocacy and services organization that has been looking out for LGBTQ+ elders since 1978. SJR New York gathered to write cards filled with messages of connection and care. The letters were mailed to SAGE's two senior locations and were displayed in the windows and common areas.

LA INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



LUNAR NEW YEAR



CITY HARVEST



HOLIDAY PARTY



OUR PERSPECTIVES

At SJR, we are always elevating our clients’ DEI initiatives and finding new and engaging ways to amplify their messages.

So, of course, we apply that same level of fervor to our internal DE&B efforts to create a more inclusive workplace culture. How do we accomplish this? By sharing stories and leveraging insights on our own **SJR newsroom** platform and **LinkedIn** pages.

BELOW IS A SAMPLE OF OUR WORK IN 2023:



CELEBRATING OUR UNIQUE VOICES

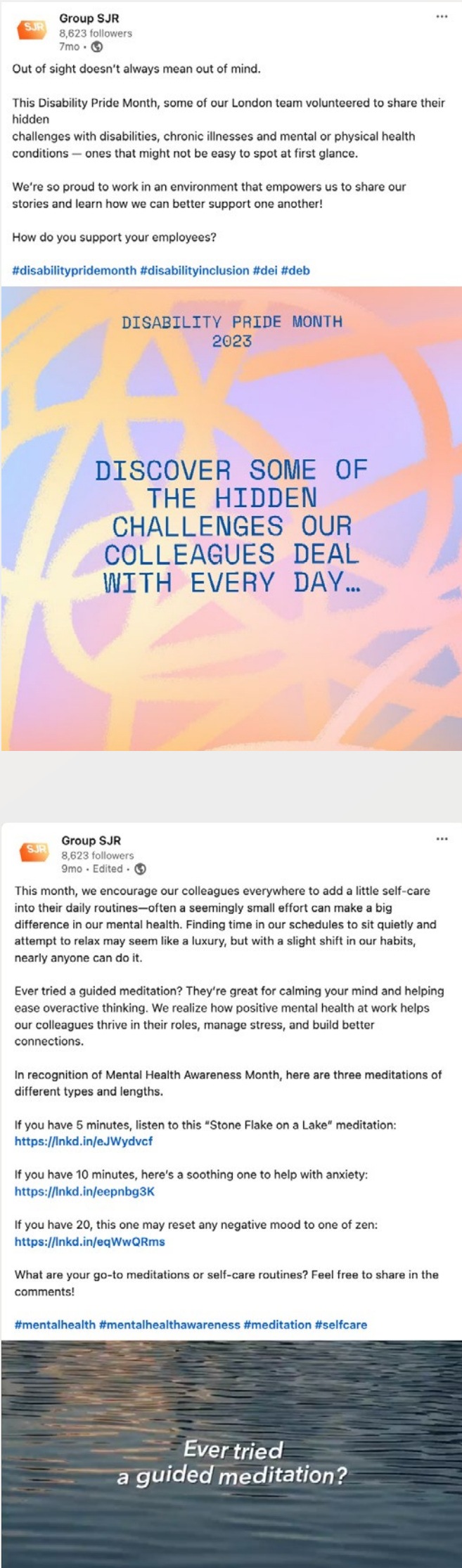
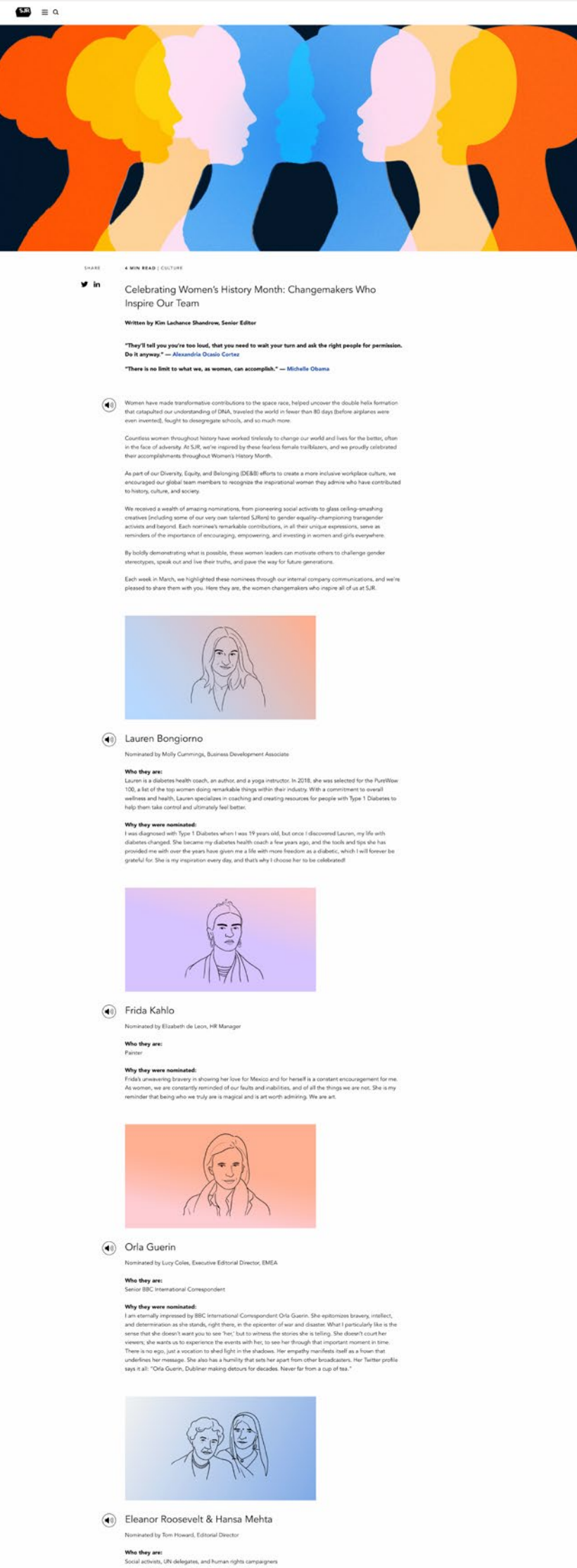
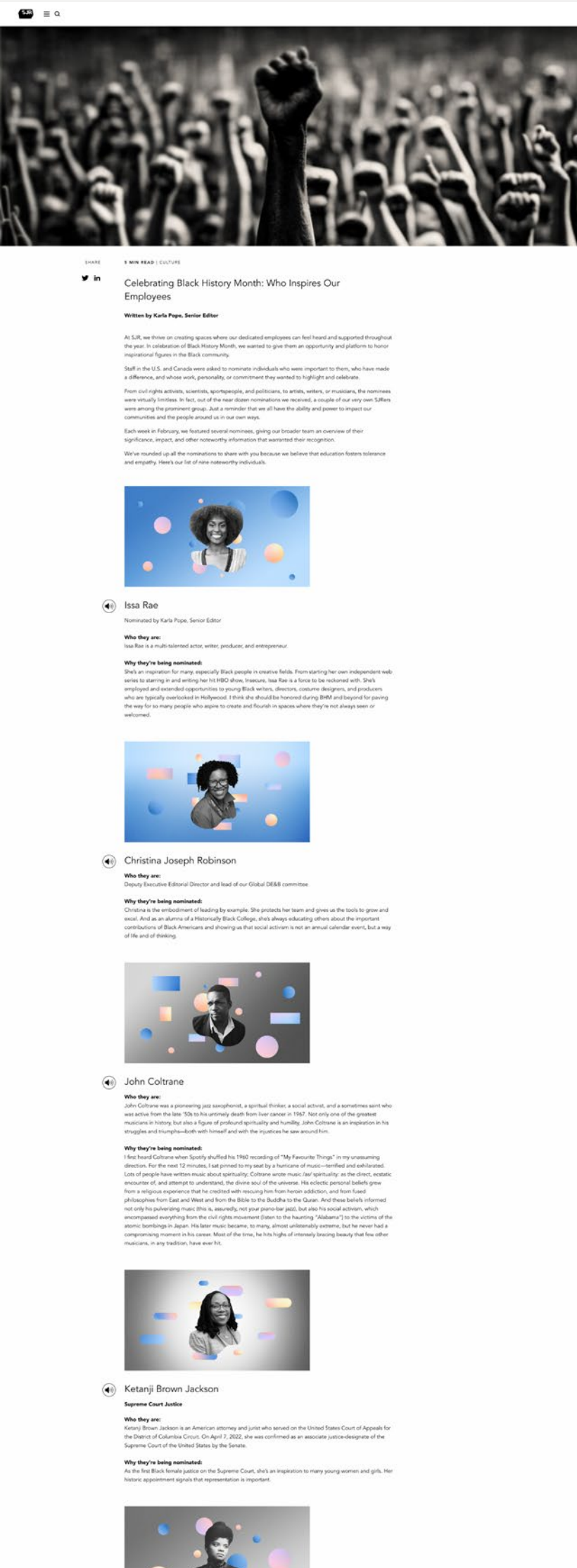
Our staff has varied backgrounds, experiences, and views, and we make space to explore and learn more about one another. It helps to bring us closer as a team so we can collaborate, create, and communicate better. Throughout the year, we celebrated and highlighted various holidays by hosting in-person events and sharing stories on our newsroom and social channels.

For example, for **Black History Month**, staff in the U.S. and Canada were asked to nominate individuals who were important to them, who have made a difference, and whose work, personality, or commitment they wanted to highlight and celebrate.

Then in March during **Women’s History Month**, we encouraged our global team members to recognize the inspirational women they admire who have contributed to history, culture, and society.

For **Mental Health Awareness Month** in May, we distributed resources to staff about where to turn for help, along with links to guided meditations.

And during **Disability Pride Month** in July, members of our London team shared their hidden challenges with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and mental and physical health conditions.

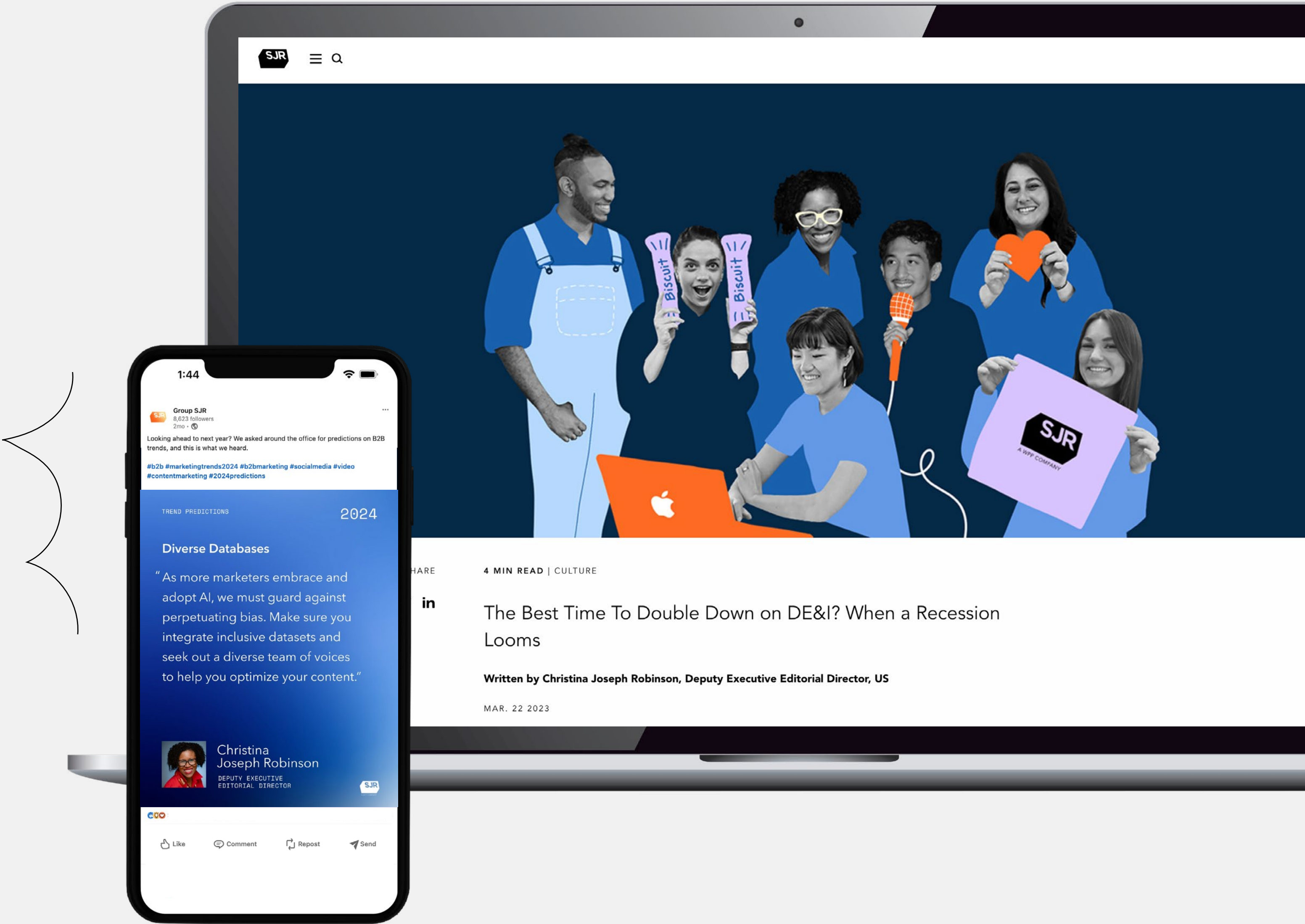


ENCOURAGING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DE&B

While many organizations are backing away from their commitments to DE&B, we believe that embedding DE&B into our culture will only make us stronger. That’s why we’ve used our platform and thought leadership to continually encourage and educate our colleagues in the iin the industry – and clients –about the future importance of staying the course and thinking about the future.

We provided tips about what brands can do during economic uncertainty to strengthen their commitments and “**double down**” on diversity, equity, inclusion – and belonging.

And in our year-end wrap-up, we warned against perpetuating bias and emphasized the importance of **integrating diverse databases** when using AI to produce content.



OUR CLIENTS

How can we serve as a strategic partner to our clients?

It starts with open and honest conversations about how they plan to present themselves to their audiences – and employees. Affirming our own commitments to advance DE&B in the workplace and beyond, we guide our clients to produce work that is engaging, impactful, and inclusive.

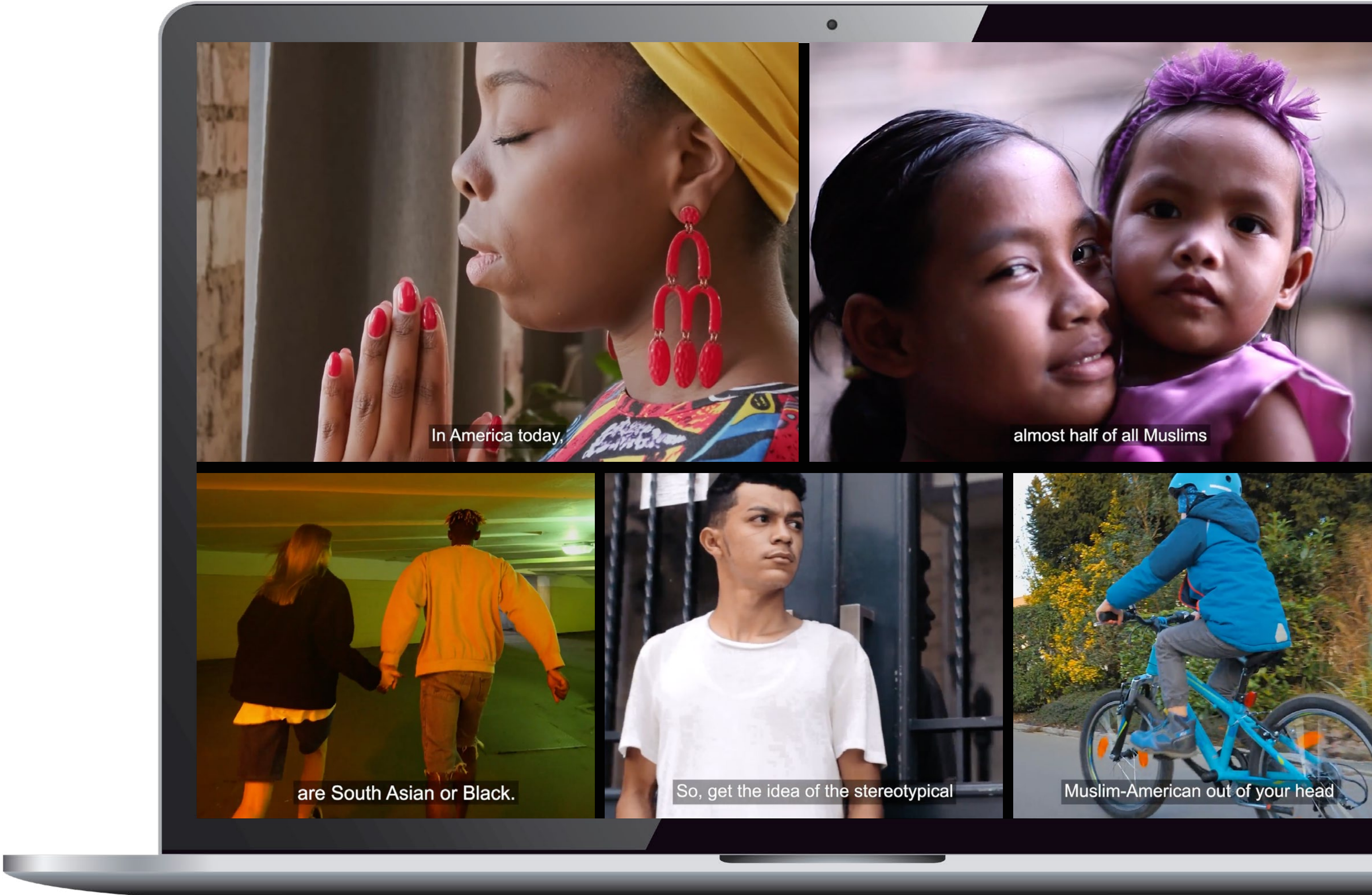
BUILDING NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH ADL

Recently, SJR teamed up with ADL, the world’s leading anti-hate organization. We will be building an ecosystem of content that positions ADL’s Center for Antisemitism Research (CAR) as an innovative research center and showcases its data-led insights and deep expertise across platforms.

More importantly, our work with ADL aims to help combat antisemitism by creating opportunities to lead conversations on critical issues, engage with audiences, and provide stakeholders (from educators and government leaders to journalists) with content that educates, informs, and inspires action.

What we’ll launch in 2024:

- Digital mapping and historical timeline of antisemitism in the U.S.
- Online resource that uncovers and decodes the complexities of anti-Zionism and antisemitism.
- Production of video content to support research measuring the impact of narratives aimed at reducing prejudice among targeted communities.



DESIGNING AN AUTHENTIC IDENTITY FOR ARGUS’ ANTI-RACISM INITIATIVES

The global Black Lives Matter movement had a great cultural impact in Bermuda and within The Argus Group.

The BLM movement sparked a renewed demand for conversation and action to fight anti-Black racism, and in response, Argus formed a Black Lives Matter (BLM) Committee.

The group was tasked with identifying institutionalized racism within The Argus Group, with the goal of eliminating it across the business. However, the members didn’t feel the BLM Committee was authentic to Argus. Because Argus was on a journey with its own unique set of challenges, they asked SJR to create a new name and brand identity to better reflect the work it was doing.

The result was a comprehensive exercise to create a new brand that encompasses Argus’ DE&I and anti-Black racism initiatives.

See below the rationale to the name and logo that helped our client understand and appreciate the concept and strategy:

- 1. A merge of two semiotic languages (voice/conversation and BLM movement) to form a new icon representing one of the core values and purposes of the committee.
- 2. Speech bubble shape is the consistent base to build visual identity for future committees, as each will strive to give voices to the people of the community.
- 3. Tall, upright font in all caps for boldness while looking more refreshed than traditional heavy fonts.



SPOTLIGHTING TOYOTA’S CULTURE OF INCLUSION

Toyota is on a path toward a future with limitless possibilities for all – and diversity and inclusion (D&I) are critical to reaching that destination.

Toyota’s commitment isn’t limited to hiring practices or honoring holidays – it’s woven into the entire fabric of the company. As its trusted newsroom agency partner, SJR has helped elevate Toyota’s storytelling through a dynamic D&I lens. This year, we’ve showcased some of the company’s initiatives and accomplishments, underpinning its continuous ranking on Fair360’s (formerly known as DiversityInc) Top 50 Companies for Diversity. Our work with the Toyota and Lexus newsrooms over the past year exemplifies its dedication to driving a culture of inclusion.

From highlighting members of various business partnering groups (BPGs) to spotlighting **women in STEM** for Women’s History Month to amplifying the voices of **employees with disabilities**, our editorial support spans a wide spectrum that is a direct testament to the company’s unyielding commitment to D&I.

For instance, our feature with **Tellis Bethel**, Toyota’s new Chief Diversity Officer, helped garner press coverage, further bolstering brand awareness and enhancing the company’s positive reputation. We also used the power of storytelling to celebrate individuals from Toyota and Lexus during **Black History Month**, **Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month**, and **Hispanic Heritage Month**. Respect for People is Toyota’s North Star and continues to fuel everything the company stands for. Additionally, we curated personal reflections from **LGBTQ+ employees** highlighting how working at Toyota and Lexus makes them feel seen and appreciated.

It’s always an honor and a privilege to lend our expertise to such a respected company that consistently puts people first.



AMPLIFYING SPOTIFY’S PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT A MORE DIVERSE AUDIO INDUSTRY

SJR worked with Spotify’s communications team to develop a variety of DEI-oriented pieces for Spotify’s **For the Record newsroom**. We used the company’s owned channels to spotlight important and impactful programs that provide support and opportunities for underrepresented communities in the audio industry, most notably music and podcast creators. We conducted interviews, wrote editorial pieces, and developed social content to amplify these important topics.



2023 STORIES INCLUDE:



Debut of **GLOW**, an equity program for LGBTQIA+ creators.



Updates on Spotify’s Creator Equity Fund, and the programs it supports, such as the **NextGen audio program**, which provides educational opportunities and scholarships for students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).



Expansion of **EQUAL**, an always-on global program to drive equity for women in music, which now has representation in more than 40 local markets.



Removing barriers for underrepresented voices in the community through **Making Space**, a program that provides free studio-quality podcasting gear to local communities in partnership with area businesses.

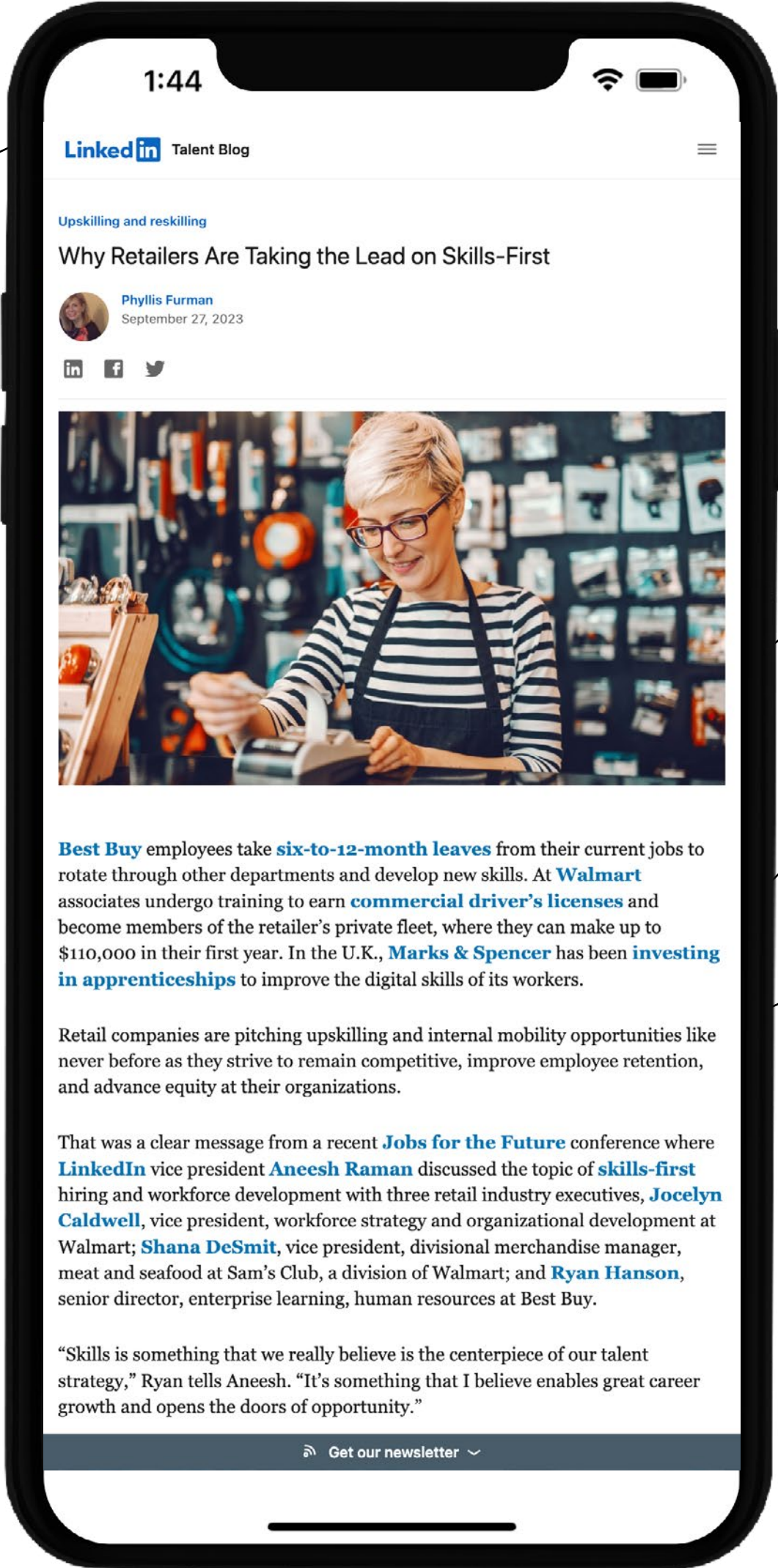
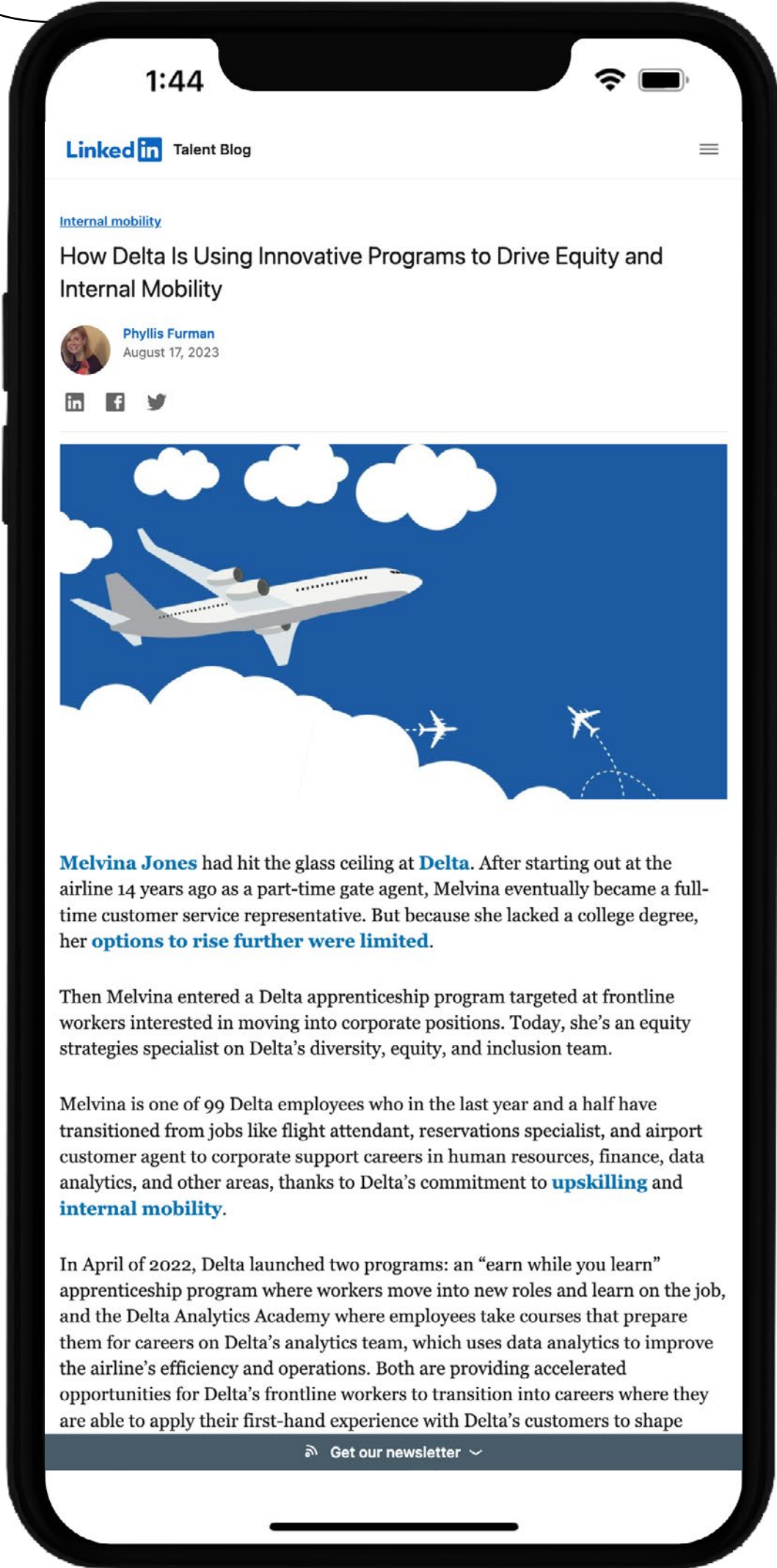


Launching the “**CAN You Hear Me**” editorial series that, in part, puts a focus on Indigenous artists from different communities in Canada.

SUPPORTING LINKEDIN’S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

A growing number of companies recognize that taking a skills-first approach to hiring and developing talent yields a more equitable and diverse workforce. Rather than evaluating job candidates based on the degrees they have, or where they worked in the past – a strategy that often leaves out qualified individuals from historically underrepresented groups – employers are assessing them based on their skills. At the same time, more companies are upskilling their current workers to help them move into jobs that weren’t open to them in the past.

SJR partnered with LinkedIn’s Talent Solutions blog, whose target audiences are talent acquisition leaders, learning and development professionals, and human resources pros, to explore the topic of skills-first and write informative and inspiring case studies. We examined how Delta Airlines has created **innovative programs** that are helping move frontline workers who don’t have college degrees into corporate jobs. And we explored how retail companies are offering **upskilling and internal mobility opportunities** to their employees to remain competitive, improve employee retention, and advance equity at their organizations.





ABOUT SJR

We are world-leading content specialists who are using content and tech to inspire, inform, and influence. At our core, we are storytellers, and we live by our journalistic roots.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The data and examples contained in SJR’s Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Report herein cover the calendar year 2023 from the months January through December. This report brings our vision and commitments into focus and helps keep us accountable as we work toward building a better future for our colleagues, community, and clients.



DATA PRIVACY AND PROTECTION

We respect privacy as a fundamental right of all people. Our employees can choose to disclose information, which helps us better understand our workforce and continue to support an inclusive workplace for all.

For further information about this report, please contact Belonging@groupsjr.com



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