

IBM's Racial Equity in Design Initiative

Busting open the myth that the pipeline doesn't exist





Nigel Prentice

*Design Director, Ecosystem Platforms
& Experiences
Chair, Racial Equity in Design*



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Community and Communications
Program Manager, Racial Equity in Design*

Blue Workroom
Conference
Yellow Lounge
Yellow Studio 4
Kitchen

Blue
Workroom

7B005

A
B
C
D

Blue Studio 1

A
B
C

You are here

Conference
7B002

Yellow Studio 4

Yellow Lounge

Red Lounge

7F001
Print Shop

Media Studio
7G012

Green Studio 3

Red Lounge
Print Shop
Restrooms
Media Studio
Green Workroom
Green Studio 3

Design Transformation of IBM

There are many dimensions to a sustainable culture.



People



Practices



Places

3,000+
formally trained designers

400,000
badged design thinkers

90+
global IBM Studios locations

Then... 2020 happened.







It was too much.

We had to do
something.

It started with a
conversation.



Leadership team

Nigel Prentice - Initiative Chairperson

Jessica Tremblay - Initiative Program Manager

First Pillar Squad Leads

Alisha Moore

Alex Graves

Andrea Barbarin

Brad Neal

CJ Diggs

Herman Colquhoun Jr.

Joelle Williams

Lydia Samuel

Marcseen Torchon

Renee Albert

Will Scott



The Second Pillar

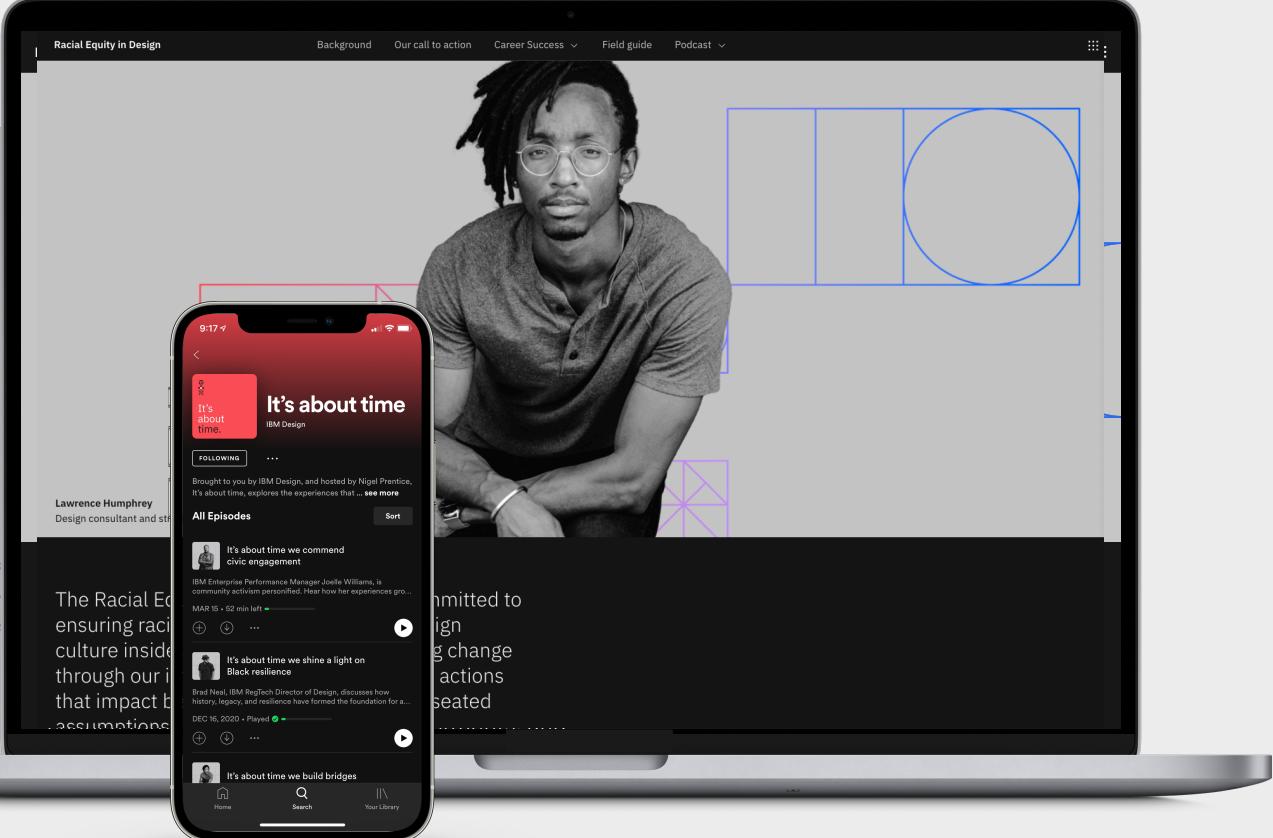
Black folks can't do it alone.
Our village is inclusive.

- We are seeing a sense of black leader fatigue. Not a complaint, but we are all being asked to sit on multiple leadership teams.
- More than allies, these leaders will help us scale our human leadership capacity and coverage



How we show up externally

Advancing Racial Equity in Design
A Field Guide for Managers and Leaders



We will tangibly and sustainably impact the experience of Black designers at IBM, and beyond.

Racial inequity is steeped in the fundamental **assumptions, behaviors, policies, and actions of the IBM corporate body**. Therefore, affecting racial inequity is about changing the fundamentals.

We can't claim to have a sustainable culture of design and design thinking if we don't **sustain a culture of racial equity**.

13% 3%

Black Americans
* 2010 census

Black designers
industry wide

We will tangibly and sustainably impact the experience of Black designers at IBM, and beyond.

In 2021, one of main the goals of the initiative was to increase representation within IBM.

164% of our target

Most Black designers ever hired at IBM in one hiring season.

So how did we do this?

1. **User Research**—What is the problem to solve? More human contact; More contact with Black designers at IBM; Representation matters
2. **Candidate Prep**—Portfolio Coaching; Interview Coaching; /design website content
3. **Social Sourcing**—Focused engagement, not shotgun
4. **Conference Sponsorship** with Hiring Day
5. **Partner with TAPs**—Hands-on human contact of all applicants



1. User Research

What is the problem to solve?

More human contact; More contact with Black designers at IBM; Representation matters.

Applicants expect welcoming human interactions during the job search process. With scale comes less and less of that.

Black applicants look for **representation** and an **established community**.

During interviews, Black applicants **ask questions related to the Black experience**, only if interviewed by another Black designer.

Lack of a design portfolio or understanding of what to include in a portfolio **is a big blocker** for applicants, especially for those who come from untraditional backgrounds.

2. Candidate Prep

Portfolio & interview coaching;
/design website content



Portfolio Coaching

Presented by IBM



Racial Equity in Design

Background

Our call to action

Career Success

Field guide

Podcast



It's about time
to share your work
and display your
most authentic self.

3. Social Sourcing

Focused engagement, not shotgun.

Nov 23rd, 2020

Lydia Samuel 10:21 AM
Hey Adeola, let me know if you're interested in design opportunities at IBM

Adeola Kukoyi 10:21 AM
Hi Lydia! It's nice to meet you :)

I'm very interested in design opportunities at IBM



Adeola Kukoyi 10:29 AM

I understand! Do you have time to review my portfolio? I'm in the midst of refining it and I'm going to switch over to using Squarespace to host my portfolio (as it's a Google site right now). I just want to show that I'm capable even if my portfolio isn't extraordinary

Lydia Samuel 10:43 AM
yes I'd be happy to!

Adeola Kukoyi • 1st
UX Design Intern at IBM
4mo • Edited •

I am so excited and honored to announce that I will be a Masters UX Design Intern this summer at IBM! 🎉 I will be a part of the Patterns Team where I'll develop my UX skills and collaborate with my fellow interns to empathetically craft experiences for people all over the world.

I first have to give God all the glory for bringing me this opportunity. I cannot even begin to thank every one of my family members, friends, and mentors for their incredible support who encouraged me to dream big. I would like to specifically thank my recruiter [Taylor Griesbach](#) for her belief and kindness, [Lydia Samuel](#) for presenting this opportunity to me, and [Drue Thomas](#) for her tremendous advice, guidance, and support.

#ibm #uxdesign #blackwomenindesign
#blackwomenbelongintech #uxintern



with IBM

391

82 comments



Adeola Kukoyi • 1st
UX Design Intern at IBM
2w • Edited •

All things must come to an end, right?

Today is my last day as a Patterns UX Design intern. These past 8 weeks working in the Patterns program have been absolutely amazing. I've been shaped into a problem solver, a researcher, a better designer, and a better human being. I am proud of the work my talented team and I have done and the solution we have created. I'm just so incredibly grateful to have had such an opportunity to work with and learn from mentors, coaches, other interns, and other IBMers. I can't wait to see how our project will impact others!

Thank you Patterns and IBM!



Patterns Design Program Graduate was issued by IBM to AdeolaKorede Kukoyi.

credy.com • 1 min read

9 comments

What a ride! Thank you for everything Nicole! ❤️

Nicole Umphress (She/Her) • 2nd
Learning & Development Program Management | People Operations | Career Strategist
2w • Edited •

These 19 amazing interns have spent the last 8 weeks with us in the [#patterns](#) program! 🎉 We are so proud of the work they did in such a short amount of ...see more

4. Conference sponsorship

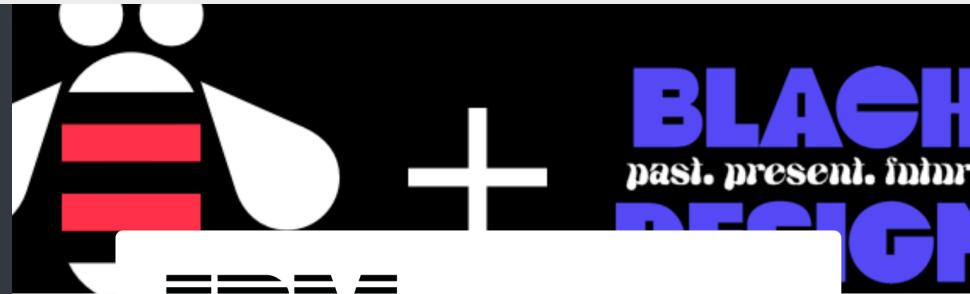
With hiring day.

“ Ok IBM, I see you, I’m intrigued now.”

“I’m definitely applying to the jobs that you guys posted and huge thank you goes to the panelists coz the conversations are really dope in terms of tackling the issues that we are facing.”

“ This conference has restored my faith to keep going. It hits different when it comes from us.

I have NEVER seen so many impactful, truthful, delightful Black designers in one space and let me tell you it was EPIC.”



Design career opportunities at IBM

IBM will be holding interviews at the career fair portion of the Black Design: Past, Present, Future conference on Friday, April 9th from 12-4PM central.

This form is intended to capture information from candidates interested in career as a designer at IBM - from students to professionals who have been in the industry for years.

5. Partner with talent team

Hands-on human contact of all applicants.

“I am beyond thrilled to join your team at IBM! Thank you all so much for making this process easy and enjoyable. **I can't tell you enough how wonderful the hiring process has been.**”

“I wanted to send a personal **note of thanks for being my first human touchpoint in the interview process with IBM.** I am so grateful/excited/humbled to join this incredible team tackling the design challenges of the day. Thank you for giving me that first chance!”

“Shout out to Jessica Tremblay for sharing the opportunity and introducing to Alisha Padolsky who was transparent about her journey and experience working at IBM. Thank you Jayne Clinkenbeard for being **so supportive throughout the recruiting and onboarding process.**”

“Hi Jessica, I wanted to circle back and say thank you for hosting the portfolio clinic. **The tools and guidance your team offered filled in the gaps on how to bridge my work from Cog Sci into working as a UX Designer.** I am looking forward to connecting with your team to have more review time so I can apply for a fall role.”

Opportunities

Transform hiring to be human centered, not process centered.

1. **Social sourcing**—Authentic reach from current employees of color to candidates of color works.
2. **More human interaction**—Candidates who have a human touch point along the hiring process are more likely to commit to the job.
3. **Representation matters**—Ensure the interview team reflects and represents the the lived experience of the candidate.
4. **Optimizing for equity**—Remove the degree requirement, address and re-imagine the portfolio requirement, and assist with portfolio and interview prep.
5. **Re-write the job descriptions**—Candidates of color look for evidence of inclusion and authentic diversity.

Thank you!

Learn more about the initiative at
racialequityindesign.com

Question? Connect with Nigel and Jessica
over on LinkedIn!



Finish slide

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racialequityindesign.com

