

SECTION VI

Perspectives From Managers:

White Males and Women of Color

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Introduction

For the first time, the *2020 Women of Color in Business: Cross-Generational Survey*® sought the opinions and experiences of white male managers and contrasted them with female managers of four races (Black, LatinX, Asian and white). Co-authors Bonita C. Stewart and Jacqueline Adams added this new component to their research as a follow-up to the chapter, *Dreaming of Allies*, in their book, “A Blessing: Women of Color Teaming Up to Lead, Empower and Thrive.”

After the book’s publication, the authors received many questions from senior white male leaders and managers about how they could become more inclusive, empathetic, and helpful to female leaders and managers of color, especially in the aftermath of the racial justice protests in 2020.

The new research painted a portrait of white male allies eager to be helpful but tentative, perhaps even confused, about a workplace landscape that has changed so drastically so quickly. Many corporations have strengthened their Diversity and Inclusion commitments across areas such as hiring, minority-owned business and supplier engagement, and raised the expectations of all employees through code of conduct policies.

Context and Perspective

The year 2020 was momentous for many reasons. A woman of color, Kamala Harris, was elected Vice President of the United States for the first time in the nation’s almost 250-year history. More women of color ran and were elected to office than ever before. And, Black women were credited with driving successful voter registration efforts that ensured the victory by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. The [A.P. VoteCast](#) survey found that 93% of Black women voted for Biden/Harris. These successes are the embodiment of the data presented in the 2019 Survey. They are evidence of the power of SaaS or “sisters as a service” and “teaming up,” which the authors described in their book.

For business leaders, 2020 was filled with complexity, none of which is going away.

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic forced the lockdown of almost all travel and major losses for the bricks-and-mortar sector of commerce. In 2020, COVID-19 caused approximately 375,000 deaths in the U.S., according to the [Centers for Disease Control](#).

In the United States, women, especially Black and LatinX women, bore the most severe economic burden with substantial job losses in the service industries and occupations where women are disproportionately represented.

By the fourth quarter, close to 1 million women had dropped out of the workforce, four times the number of men. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) reported in October that since February 2020, the number of Hispanic women in the U.S. labor force had fallen nearly 7%, the number of Black women declined 5.6%, and the number of white women nearly 3%. The figures compare to a drop of just

1.7% for white men and less than 1% for Hispanic men. The decrease for Black men was more than 4%.

Worldwide protests for social and racial justice followed the videotaped murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer and workplaces did not escape the tumult.

Young people, young workers, supported many of the protests, corroborating this survey's findings about generational diversity, that Gen Z and Millennial workers are more mission-driven.

Business leaders were forced to have difficult race conversations and in response, many pledged their support for racial harmony and offered innovative responses to the collective trauma. For example, [OneTen.org](https://oneten.org) aims to train and hire 1 million Black workers over the next decade and provide increased investments for entrepreneurs of color.

As global business leaders make their way through 2021, it is clear that the complexities described here now constitute a new normal for workplaces.

Leadership Implications

Leadership is undergoing its own seismic shift and the new normal of the workplace will require greater agility, increased empathy. It will be increasingly important that all employees have more consistent, less variable, experiences.

The authors want to clarify their definitions of leaders and managers. In the context of this Executive Summary, the term “leaders” refers to senior executives, individuals at the top of their organizations, and the academic subject of management. The word “manager” is more generic—anyone who oversees individual workers and directly influences their performance.

The authors have devised a Manager Variability (MV) measure, comparing four management types against employee expectations and their respective inclusive leadership capabilities, which we categorize as cultural intelligence or CQ. Components of CQ move beyond IQ and EQ (emotional intelligence) to include awareness and appreciation of race, gender, and generational differences. The four types are: Transformational, Agile, Hands Off and Uneasy.

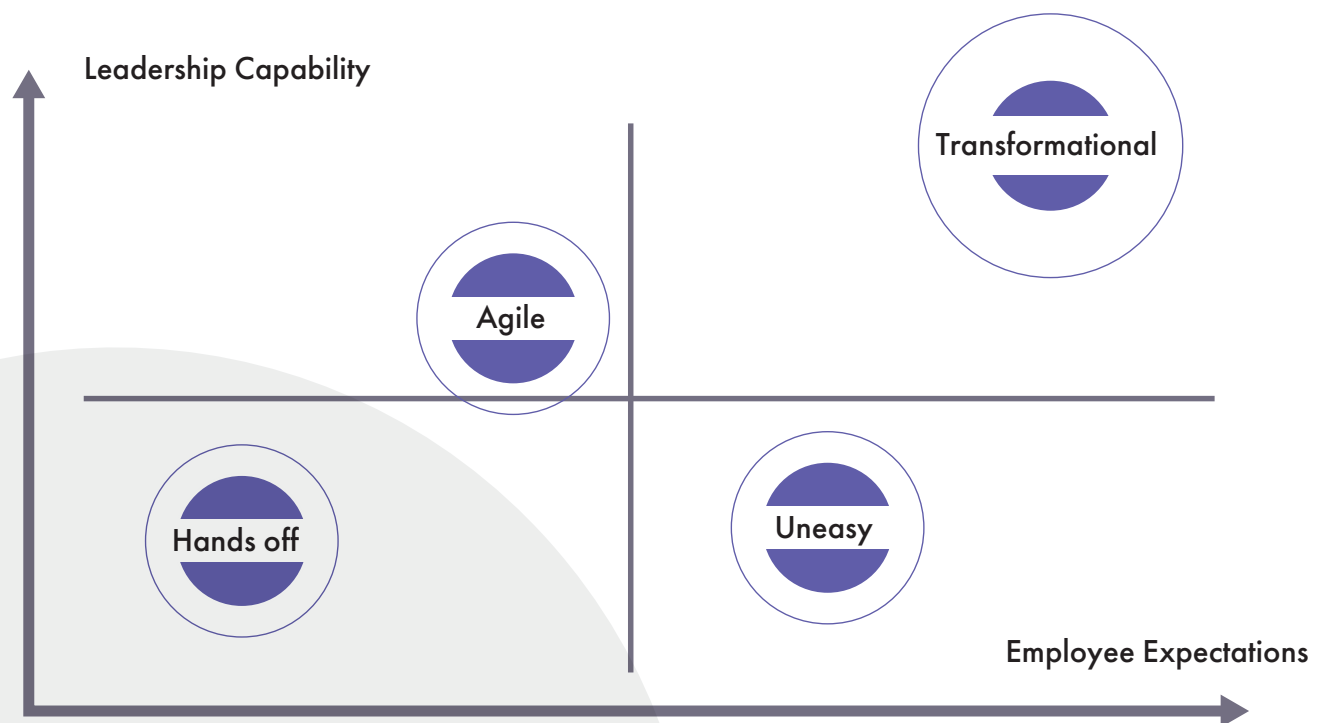
The ultimate goal is to recognize and reward the most “transformational” managers. Those are the managers who will most successfully drive profitability, innovation and retention among their star performers, who increasingly will be women of color.

“Agile” managers with inherent or learned CQ will likely move toward increasingly high-performing and satisfied teams.

By contrast, managers who are “uneasy” or remain “hands off” will face a challenging management journey, if they fail to improve their leadership capabilities.

Transformational leaders, both female and male, can help those “uneasy” and “agile” leaders transition to embrace their “cultural intelligence” alongside their IQ and EQ (emotional intelligence).

MANAGER VARIABILITY



Eleven Major Findings

The new data from white male managers and their female counterparts across four races revealed that the men had an awakening about systemic racism in the workplace in 2020, which they were helping to combat, especially if the activities serve a business case.

The findings show that white male managers are:

- Better compensated than women of color managers;
- Offered career-enhancing “stretch assignments” to a greater degree; and
- Were being rewarded for their Diversity & Inclusion activities to a greater degree.
- They reported feeling valued at work and received regular promotions.
- They asked for help when they felt stress at work more than the female managers.
- When seeking and offering feedback, they were most comfortable interacting with people who shared their race and gender.

Despite all of their positive feedback, the white men also reported that they cannot be their authentic selves in the workplace. These findings reflect their confusion, perhaps their fear, their need for greater “psychological safety” in the new corporate and societal landscapes.

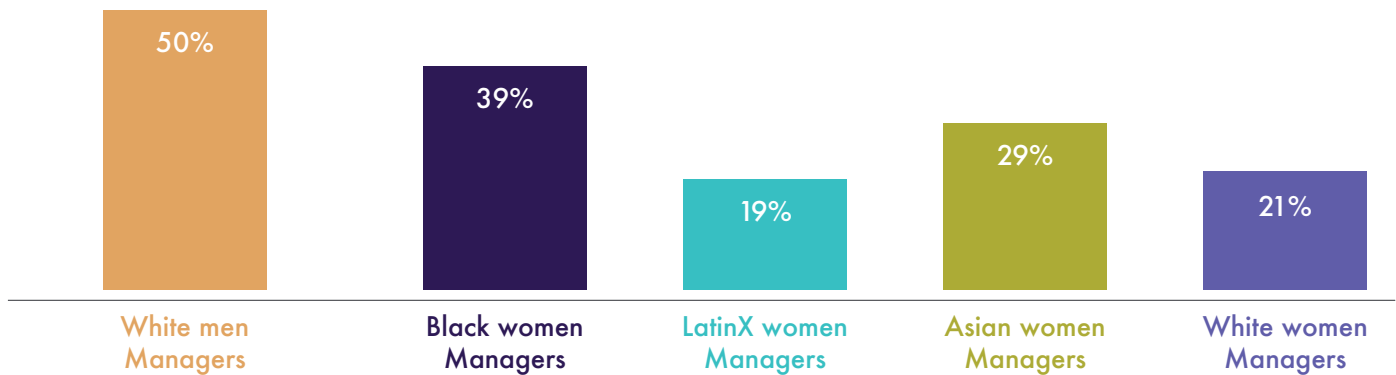
Blatantly racist and misogynistic behaviors and attitudes toward women and people of color exemplified in the “Mad Men” series are now largely forbidden. As the authors stated above, female managers have an opportunity, and a necessity, to help their male allies become comfortable being uncomfortable. In the physical world, muscles strengthen when they are stretched, when they experience a bit of pain. The same is true for corporate and behavioral muscles. Discomfort should come to be valued as a sign of progress.

1. Scrutiny

50%, half of the white male managers said their job applications were scrutinized because of their race and gender. By contrast, much smaller percentages of the female managers held this view: 39% of the Black female managers, 19% of the LatinX female managers, 29% of the Asian female managers, and 21% white female managers. A quarter of the LatinX female managers felt that their race and gender made them more attractive candidates for employment.

MANAGERS: SCRUTINY IN HIRING

People viewed my job application more skeptically, with more scrutiny



MANAGERS: SCRUTINY IN HIRING

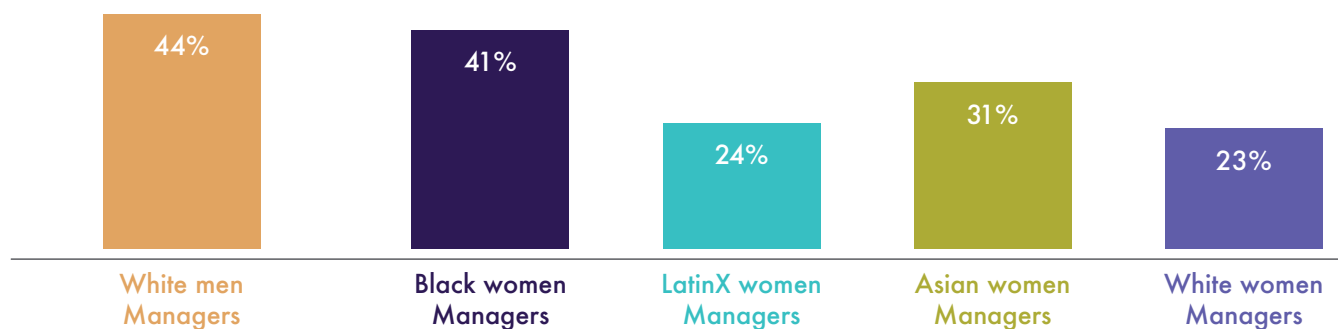
My race and/or gender made me more desirable as an applicant



44% of white male managers said that their identity caused others to view their work with some scrutiny, more than was reported by the female managers of any race. Once again, about a quarter of LatinX female managers said that their race and gender were considered positives on the job.

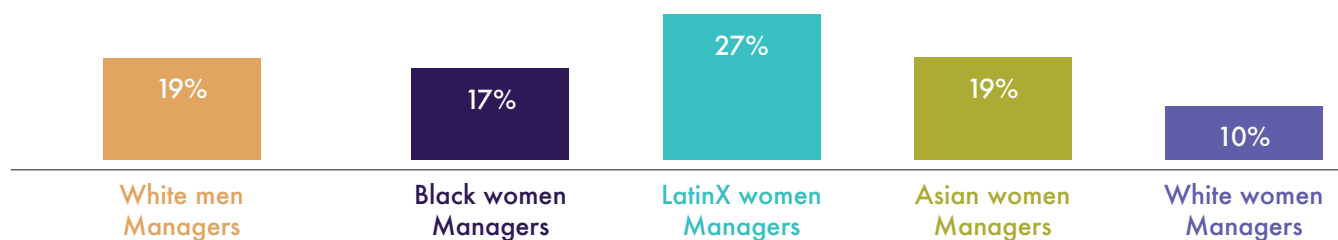
MANAGERS: SCRUTINY ON THE JOB

In the workplace my race and/or gender make people view my contributions more skeptically, with more scrutiny



MANAGERS: SCRUTINY ON THE JOB

My race and/or gender is considered a positive in the workplace



2. Career and Financial Satisfaction

Despite the scrutiny they reported, white male managers cited high levels of career satisfaction and financial satisfaction.

- 68% said they have made strong contributions at work, and 61% said their work contributed to the social good.
- Black female managers had the highest score on the question of strong contributions at work at 73%.

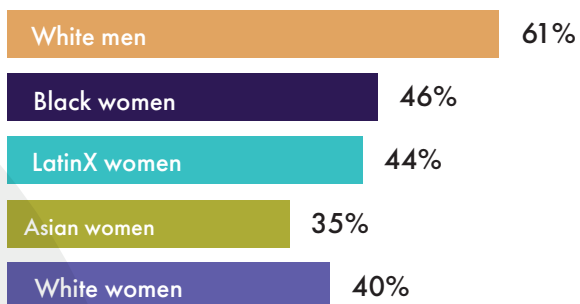
MANAGERS: CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION

**I've made strong contributions
in the jobs I've had**



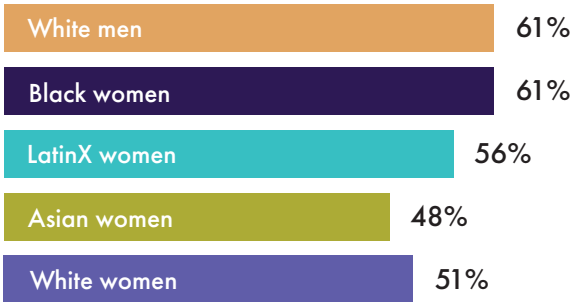
MANAGERS: CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION

**I feel as though my work in my
job has had a good impact on
society more broadly**



MANAGERS: CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION

I've had the opportunity to do meaningful and satisfying work

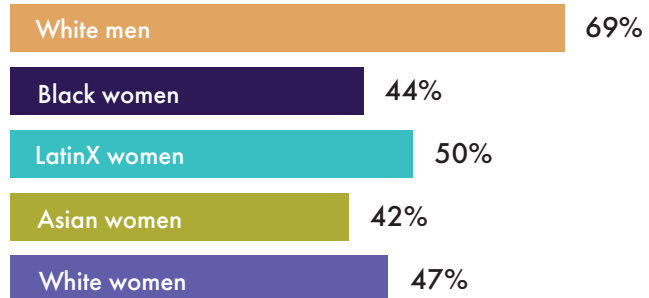


White male managers reported strong satisfaction with their ability to earn and save, and thereby have the lifestyle they want at 59%.

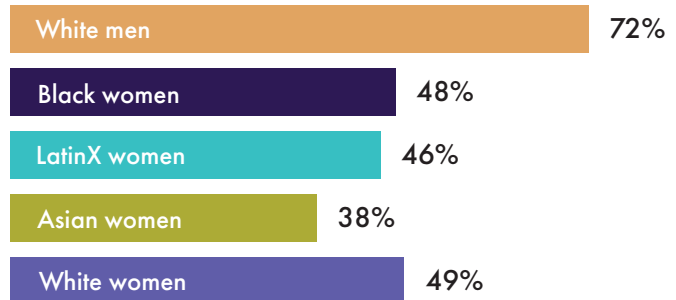
- White female managers reported the least satisfaction in this category at 29%.
- 36% of Asian female managers, 33% of LatinX female managers, and 32% of Black female managers, 33% of L reported financial satisfaction.

MANAGERS: WORKPLACE AND FINANCIAL SATISFACTION

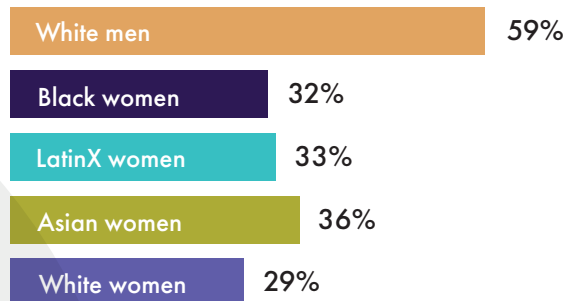
I am very satisfied with my life overall



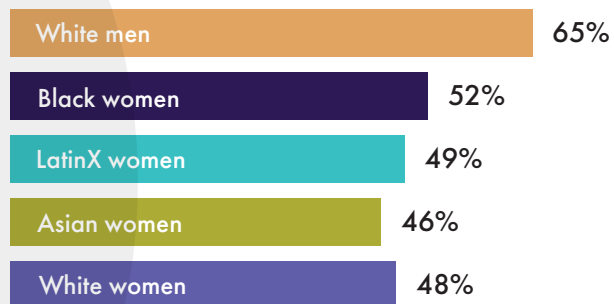
I feel fulfilled in my work



I've been able to earn and save as much as I would like for the lifestyle I want



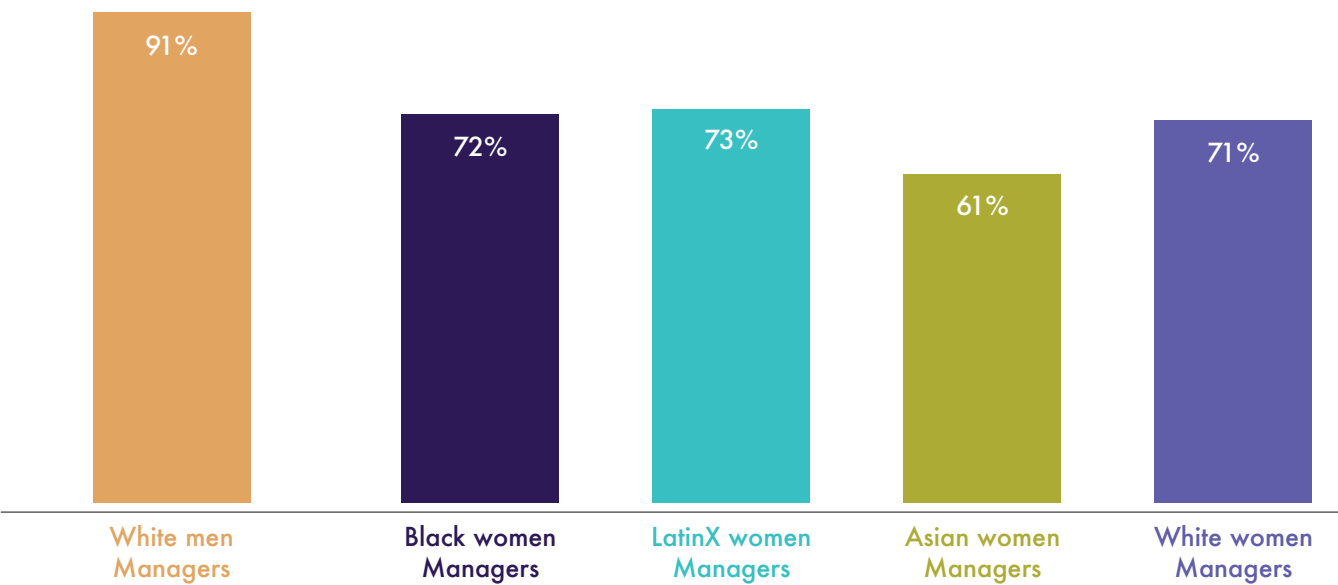
I have a network of colleagues and friends at work who support me when I need it



91% of white male managers felt that they were growing in their roles. Their perception was more significant than that of any of the races of female managers.

MANAGERS: CAREER GROWTH

I feel as if I'm growing in my current role at my company

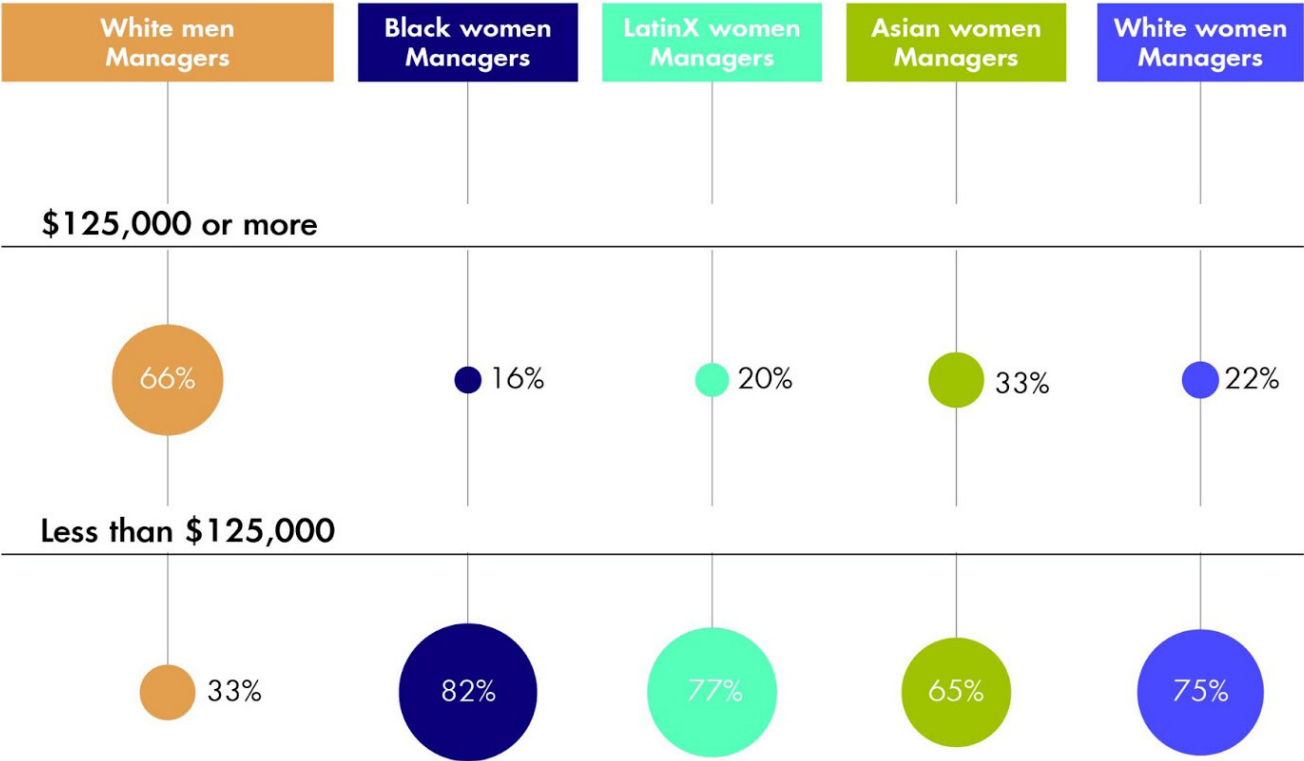


3. Salaries

Their salaries might be a major reason why white male managers and their female counterparts reported such divergent reactions to their job satisfaction and financial situations. Women managers of all races reported that they earned significantly less than white male managers.

- 66% of white male managers reported earning more than \$125,000 per year.
 - In the same wage category were only 16% of Black female managers, 20% of LatinX female managers, 33% of Asian female managers, and 22% of white female managers.
- The inverse of the wage data was equally stark. 33% of white male managers reported earning less than \$125,000, as did 82% of Black female managers, 77% of LatinX female managers, 65% of Asian female managers and 75% of white female managers.

MANAGERS: INCOME DISPARITIES

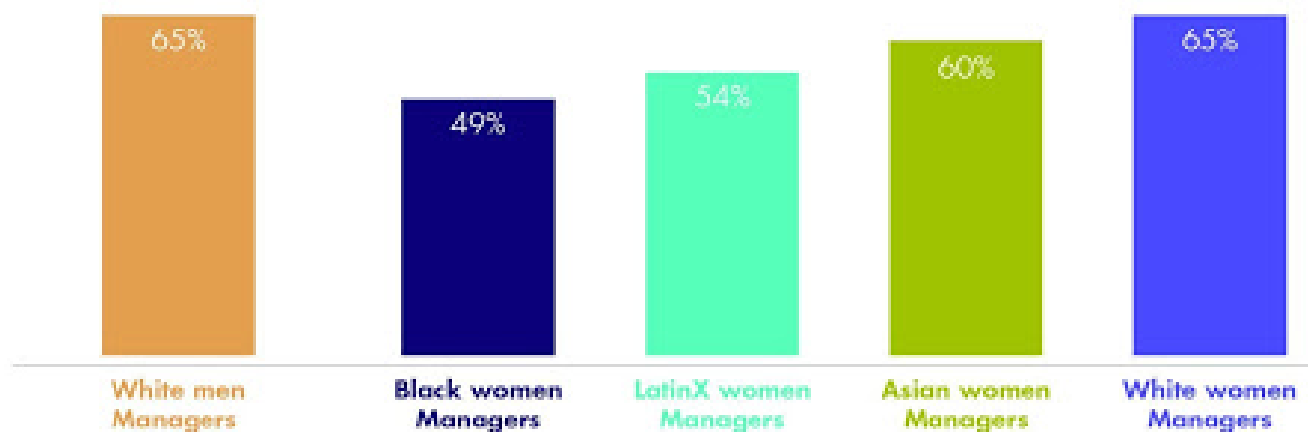


As a corollary to the salary question, the authors asked white male and female managers of color if they knew where to seek financial advice.

- 65% of white male and female managers said they knew where to turn.
- The numbers were smaller for Black female managers at 49%, LatinX female managers at 54% and Asian female managers at 60%.

MANAGERS: DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO TURN TO SEEK FINANCIAL ADVICE WHEN YOU NEED IT?

Yes



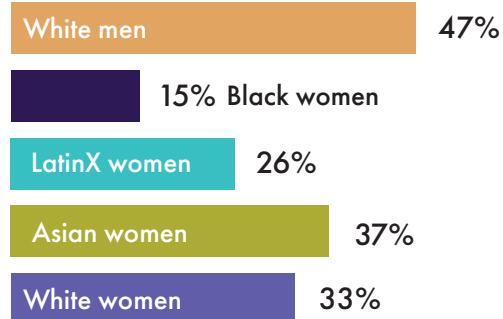
4. Confidence and Ambition

Asked about career stability and ambition, the white male managers seemed confident that they would remain at their same companies, in the same or a higher role in three years. Only 5% of the men expected to be at a different company.

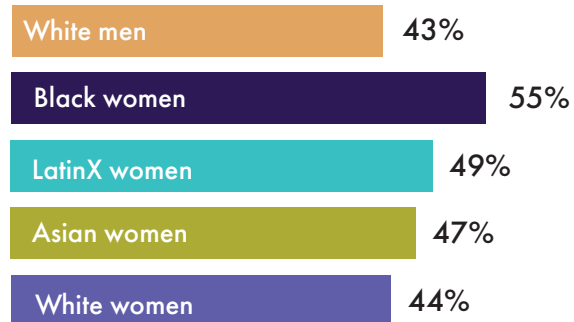
- All of the women of color managers expected to be in higher roles at their companies in three years, with 55% of Black female managers citing more ambition than the other races.
- Although the numbers were relatively smaller, 18% of Black female managers said they were more likely to be at another company. White female managers were not far behind at 17%.

MANAGERS: THREE YEAR PROFESSIONAL OUTLOOK

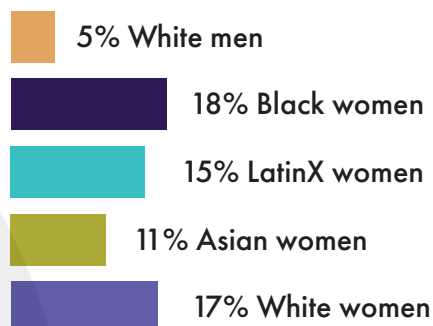
In the same role



At the same company, but in a higher role



At a different company

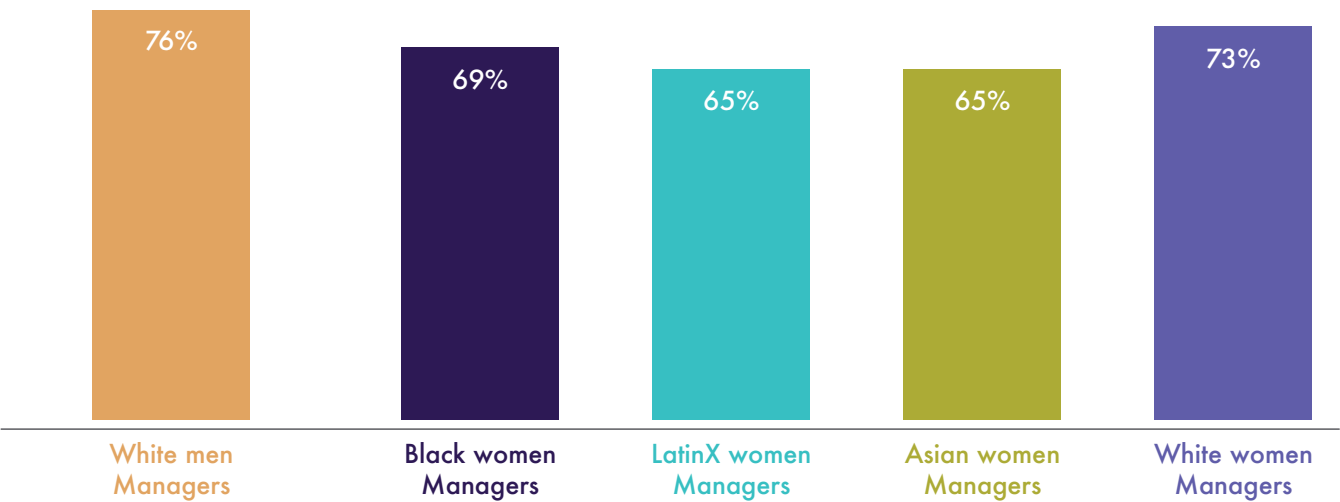


In another display of confidence, if the managers decided to switch companies, 76% of white male and 73% of white female managers reported being most confident that they could easily find another job.

- 69% of Black, 65% of both LatinX and Asian female managers were not far behind, however

MANAGERS: CAREER CONFIDENCE

If I wanted, I could find another good job
I would like relatively easily

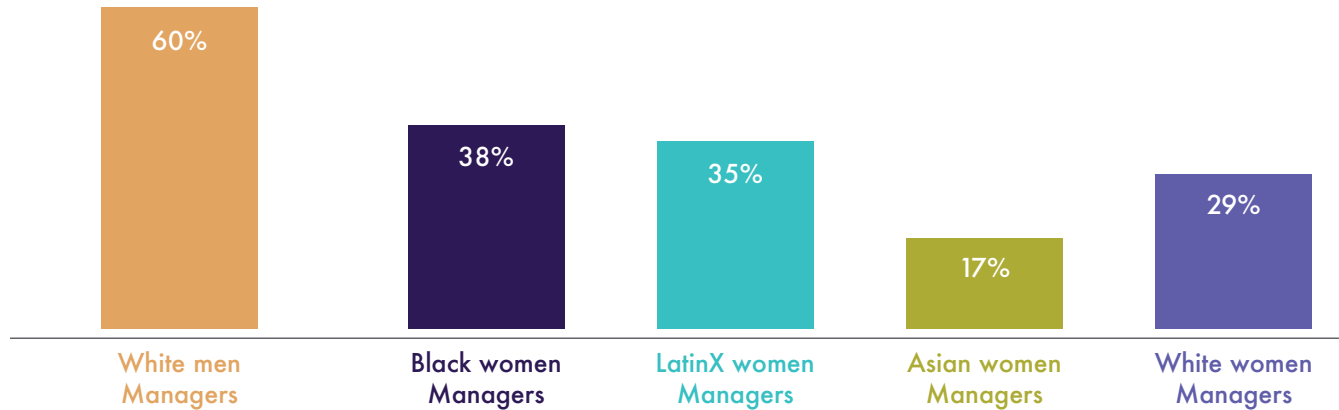


White male managers demonstrated their confidence in another finding:

- 60% of white male managers said they could consider leaving their positions within the next year.
 - The female managers were significantly less likely to leave their positions, but of those who would, Black women said they were the most likely: 38% Black, 35% LatinX, 17% Asian, 29% white women managers.

MANAGER: LEAVING WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR

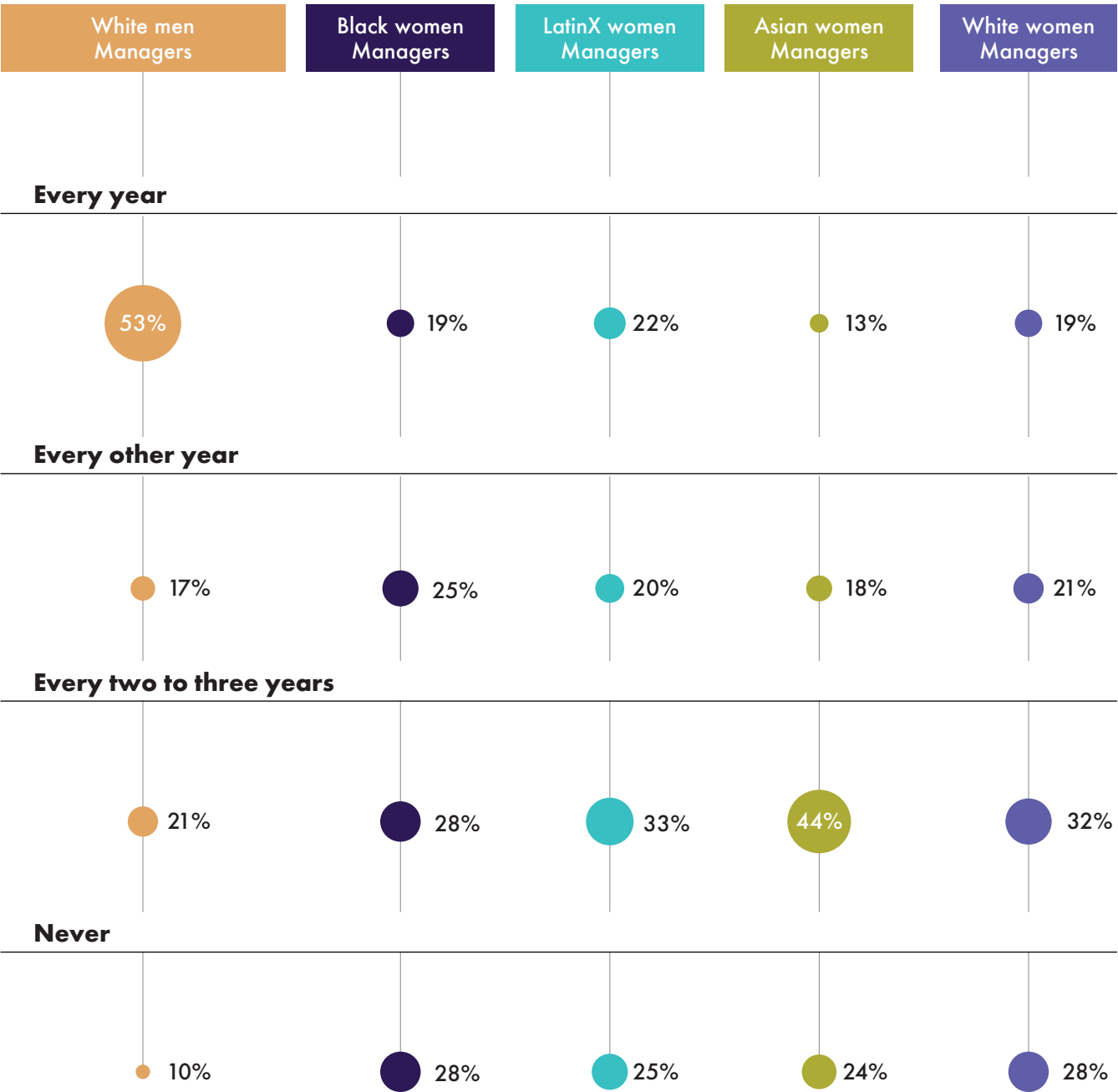
Yes



53% of white male managers expected to be promoted every year.

- By contrast, the female managers of all races were much less confident of yearly progress: 19% Black women managers, 22% LatinX women, 13% Asian women, 19% white women.

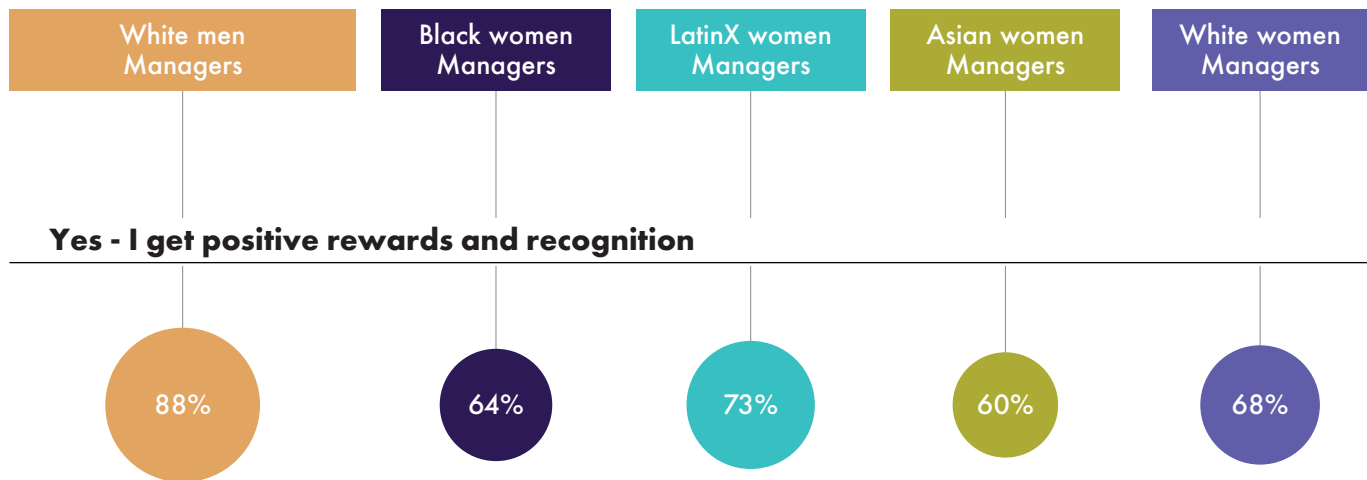
MANAGERS: EXPECTATIONS FOR PROMOTIONS



5. Diversity and Inclusion: Involvement and Rewards

White male managers reported the strongest rewards for their involvement with workplace D&I at 88%. The female managers of all colors reported significantly less appreciation on the job for their involvement with diversity and inclusion activities.

MANAGERS: RECOGNITION FOR DIVERSITY & INITIATIVE WORK



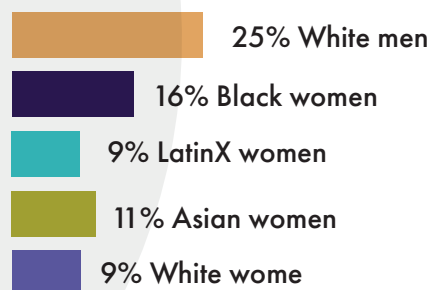
The factors that convinced the white male managers of D&I's importance were different from the other respondents.

- 25% of white male managers cited economic benefit, as opposed to only 9% of white female managers.

The female managers of all colors reported that D&I efforts create a better workforce and ensure that people are treated fairly to a far greater degree than their white male counterparts.

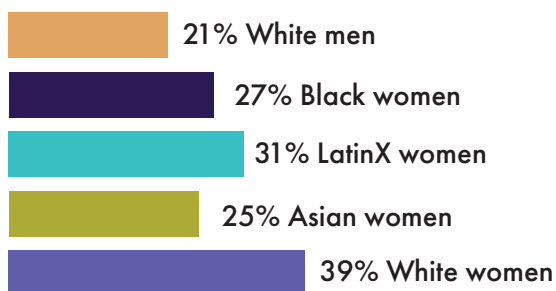
MANAGERS: PERSPECTIVE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT YOUR COMPANY

Good for the economy overall



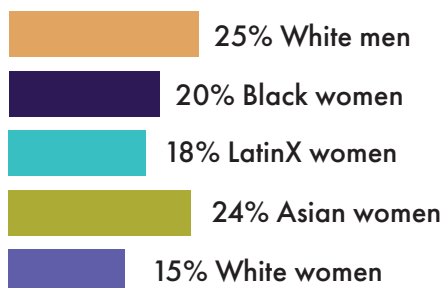
MANAGERS: PERSPECTIVE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT YOUR COMPANY

Just the right thing to do



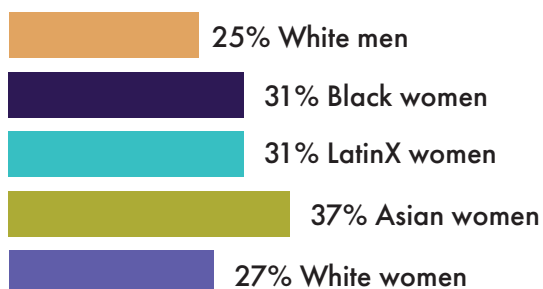
MANAGERS: PERSPECTIVE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT YOUR COMPANY

Good for business overall



MANAGERS: PERSPECTIVE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT YOUR COMPANY

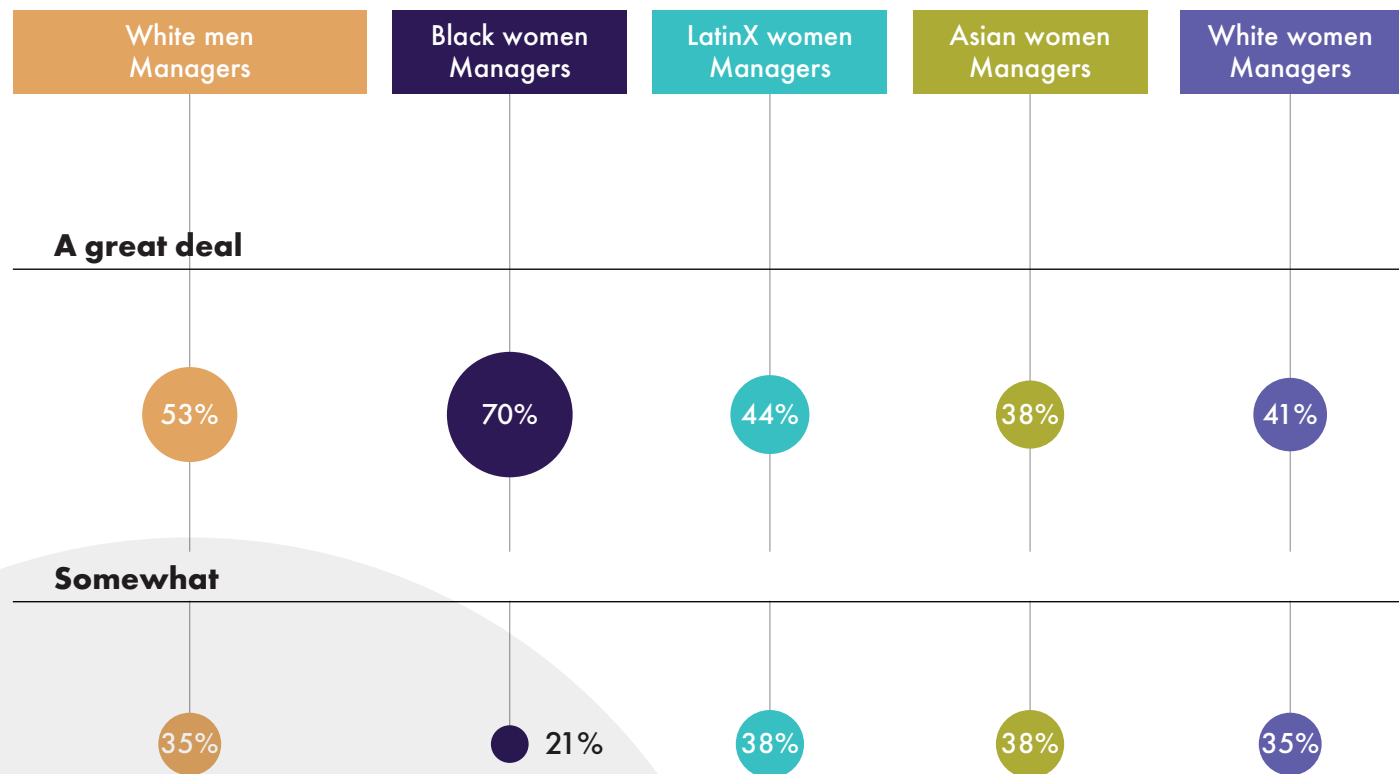
Creates a better workforce



6. Systemic racism and the U.S. economy

At 70%, the vast majority of Black female managers said that systemic racism had hurt the U.S. economy a great deal. 53% of white male managers concurred.

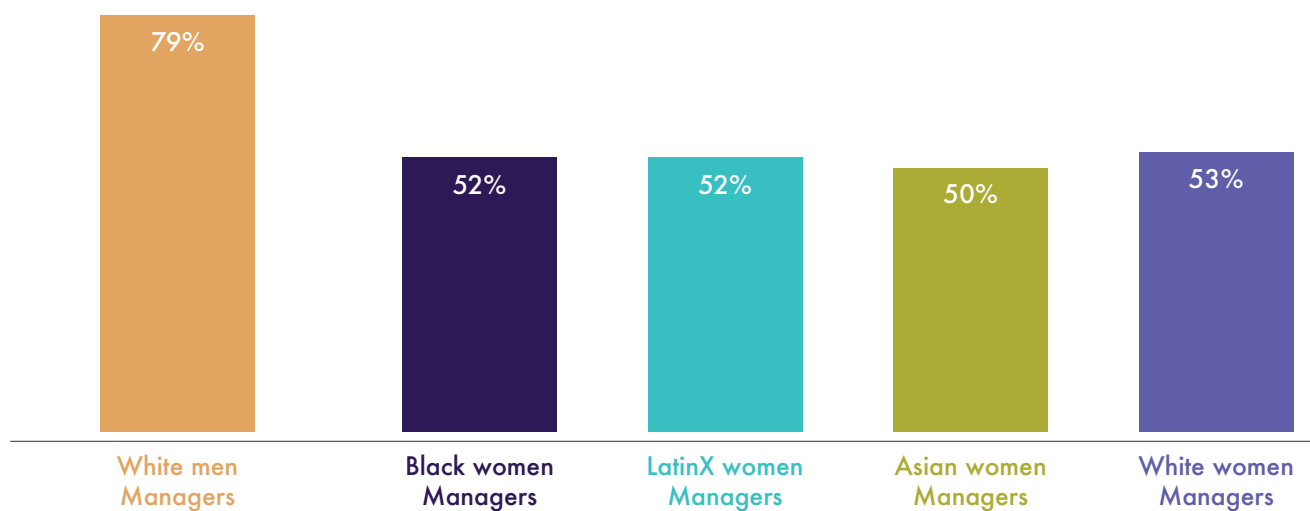
MANAGERS: IMPACT OF SYSTEMIC RACISM ON THE ECONOMY



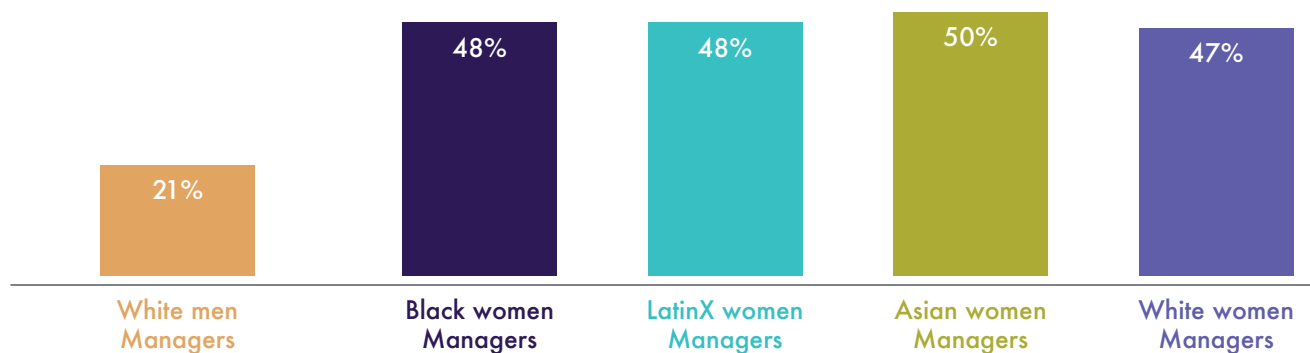
Asked if an increased focus on Diversity & Inclusion activities had begun before the 2020 racial justice protests, only 21% of the white male managers agreed. The women managers of all colors were more evenly mixed about when the focus on D&I activities began.

MANAGERS: INCREASED FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Yes, this began with the racial equality movement in the last year



No, this has been true since before the last year

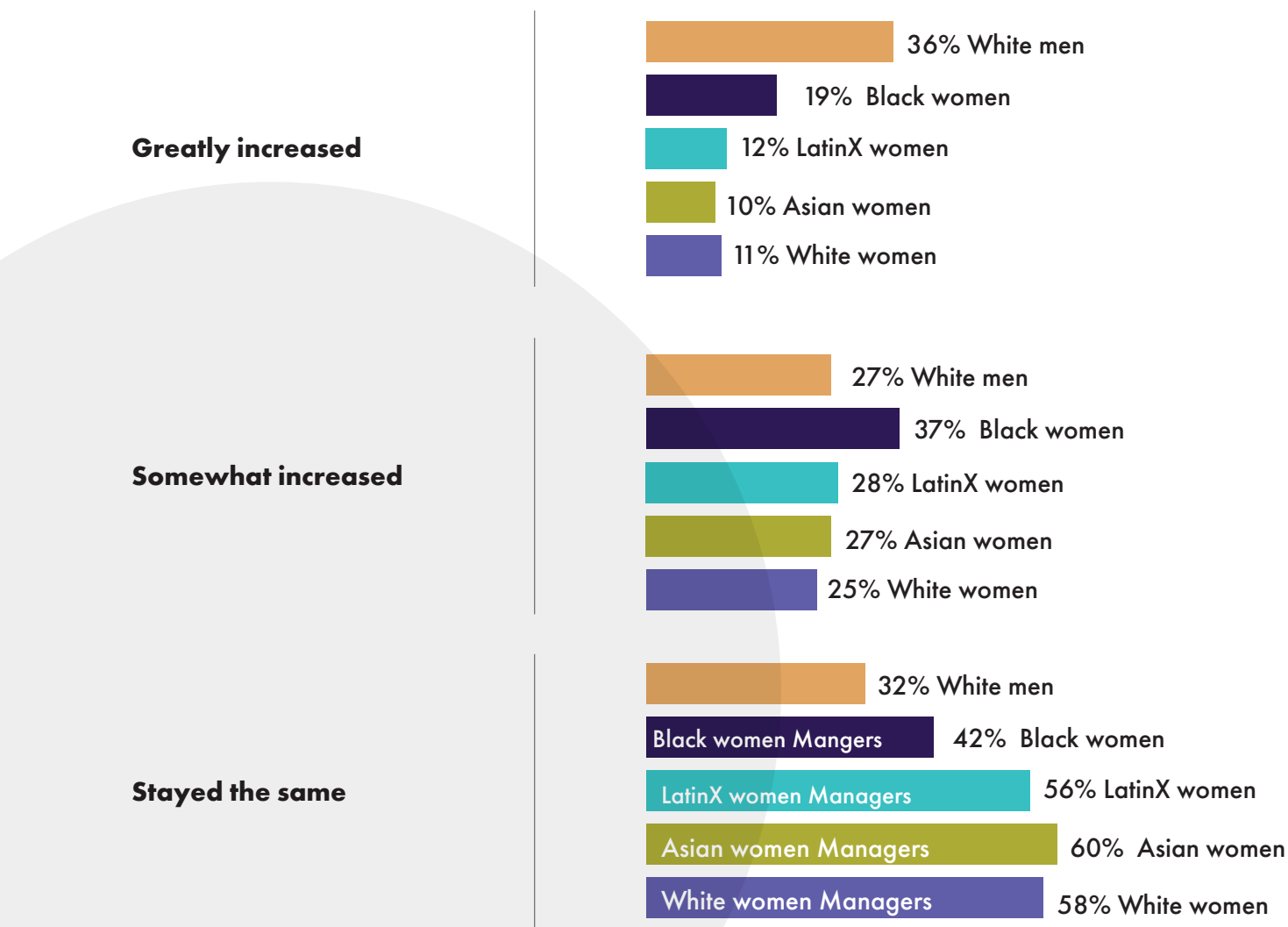


7. The aftermath of the 2020 racial and social justice protests: stress, authenticity, seeking help

As the authors observed with female desk workers, 2020 brought increased scrutiny and additional stress to the workplace, especially among Black females. Among managers, however, white males reported that they endured more stress as a result of the protests than any of the other audiences surveyed.

- 63% of white male managers reported that their stress increased greatly or somewhat in 2020, significantly more than the female managers across the races: 56% Black female managers, 40% Latinx, 37% Asian, 36% white female managers.

MANAGERS: INCREASED STRESS FROM 2020’S FOCUS ON RACIAL JUSTICE

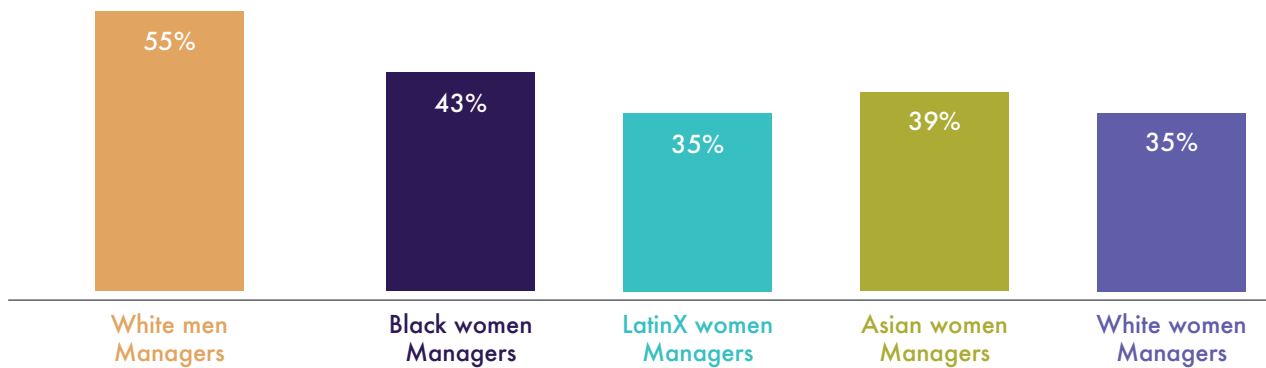


White male managers also reported that they did not feel that they could be authentically themselves in the workplace and that they had to tone down who they really were to fit in.

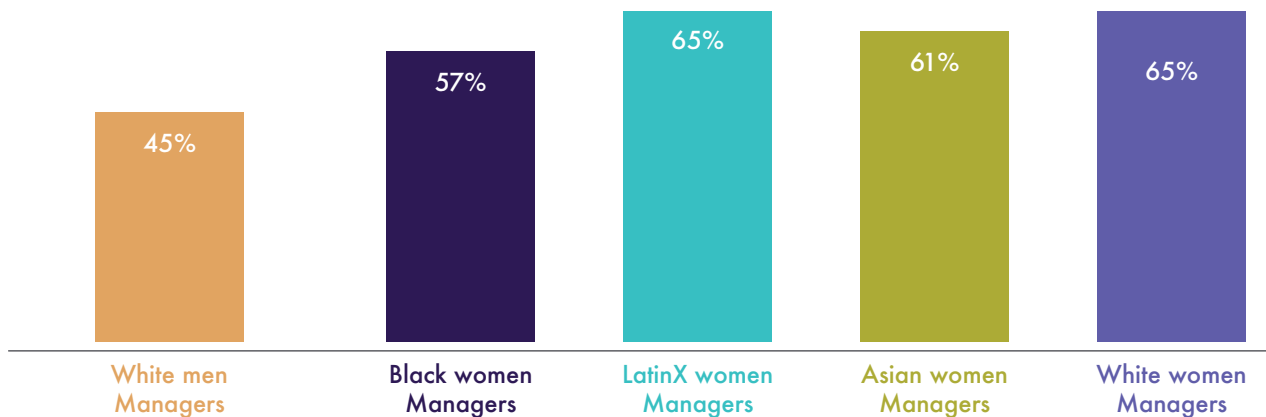
- 55% of white male managers said they felt the need to tone down who they were, compared to 43% of Black, 35% Latinx, 39% Asian, and 35% white women managers.
- Majorities of all of the female managers reported they could be authentically themselves on the job.

MANAGERS: AUTHENTICITY AT WORK

I have to tone down who I really am to better fit in



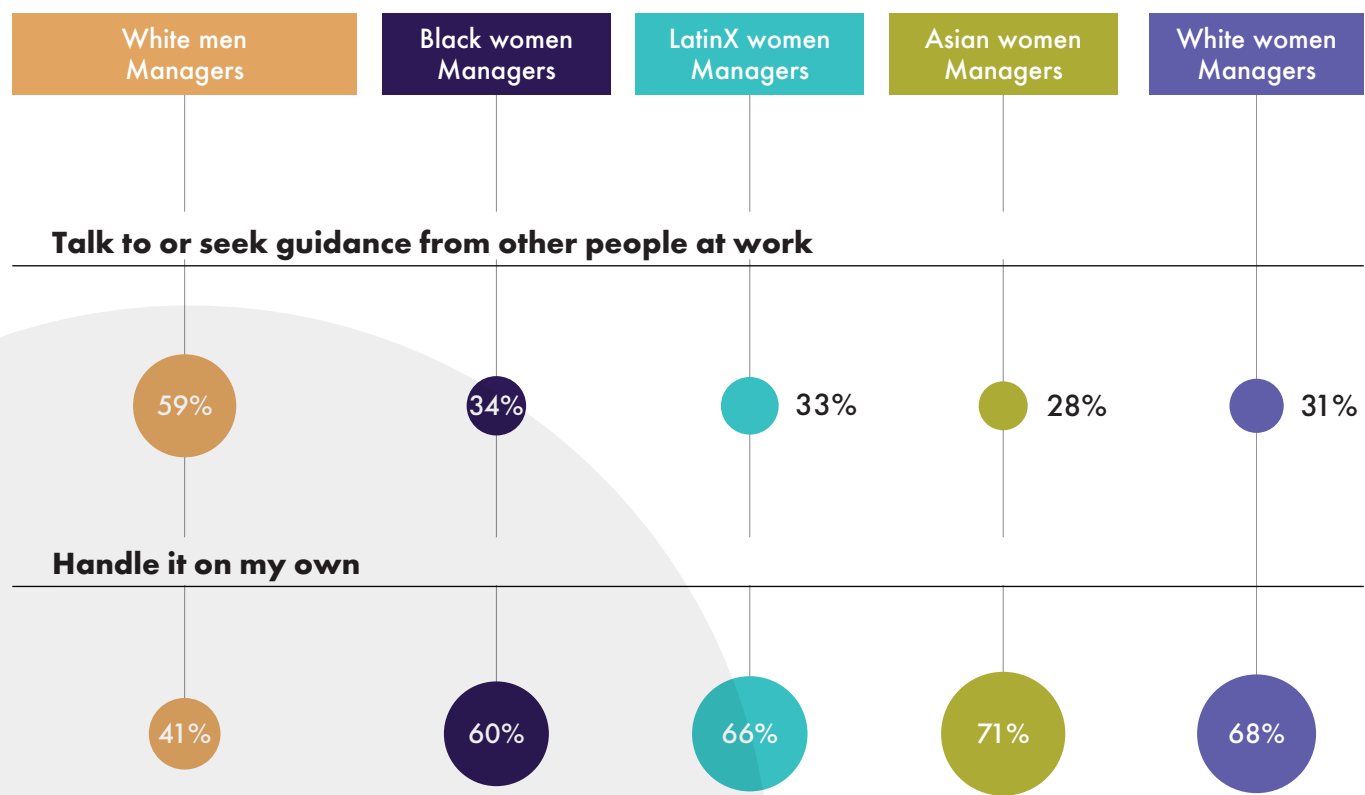
I can be authentic and myself



While white male managers reported high levels of work-related stress, they were also the audience most likely to ask for help, while Asian female managers were the least likely to do so.

- 59% of white male managers said they would ask for help when facing stress rather than deal with the stress themselves.
- Majorities of the female managers of all the races said they would deal with their stress themselves: 60% Black, 66% LatinX, 71% Asian, 68% white female managers.

MANAGERS: RESPONSE TO STRESS



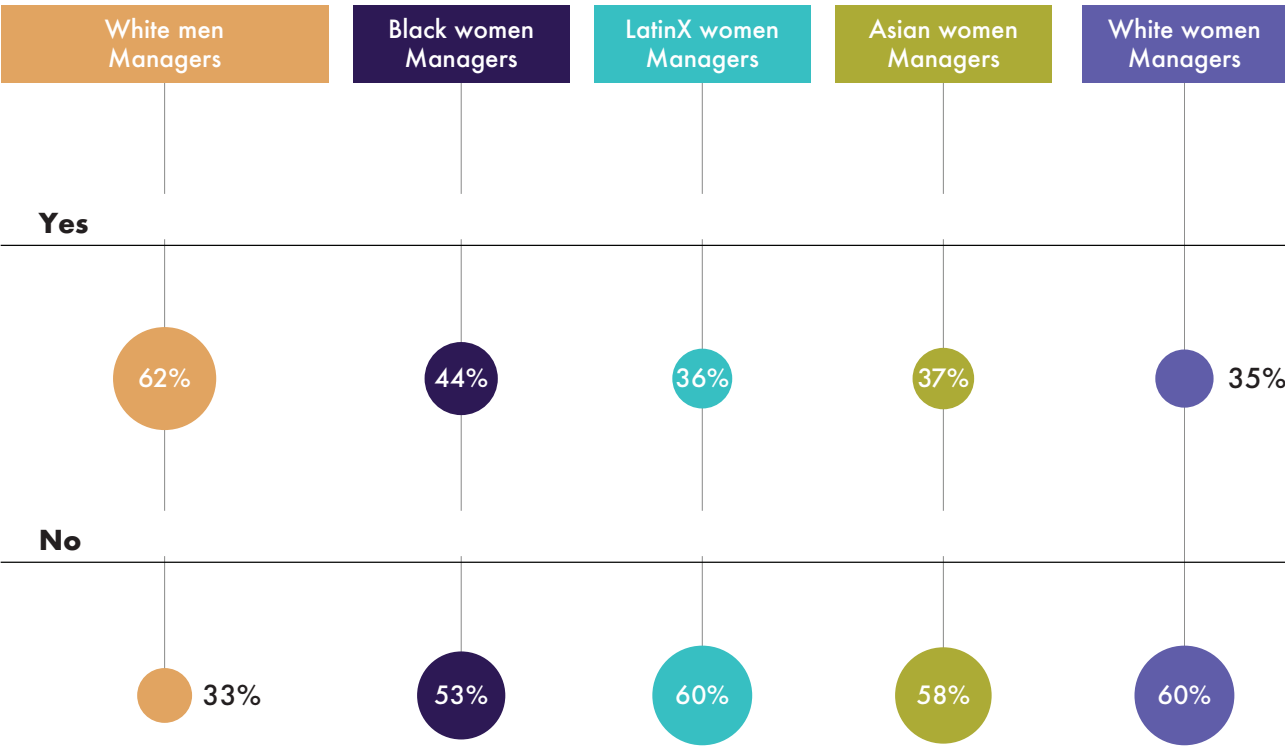
8. Stretch Assignments and Feedback

The authors advocate strongly for stretch assignments to increase the skills and opportunities for women of color in the workplace. For the first time, they included questions about stretch assignments in their *2020 Survey*.

The findings confirmed that this strategy works well for white male managers and was making a dent among women managers, especially Black female managers.

- 62% of white male managers said they had received a stretch assignment within the last 12 months, compared to 44% Black, 36% LatinX, 37% Asian, 35% white female managers.

MANAGERS: STRETCH ASSIGNMENTS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

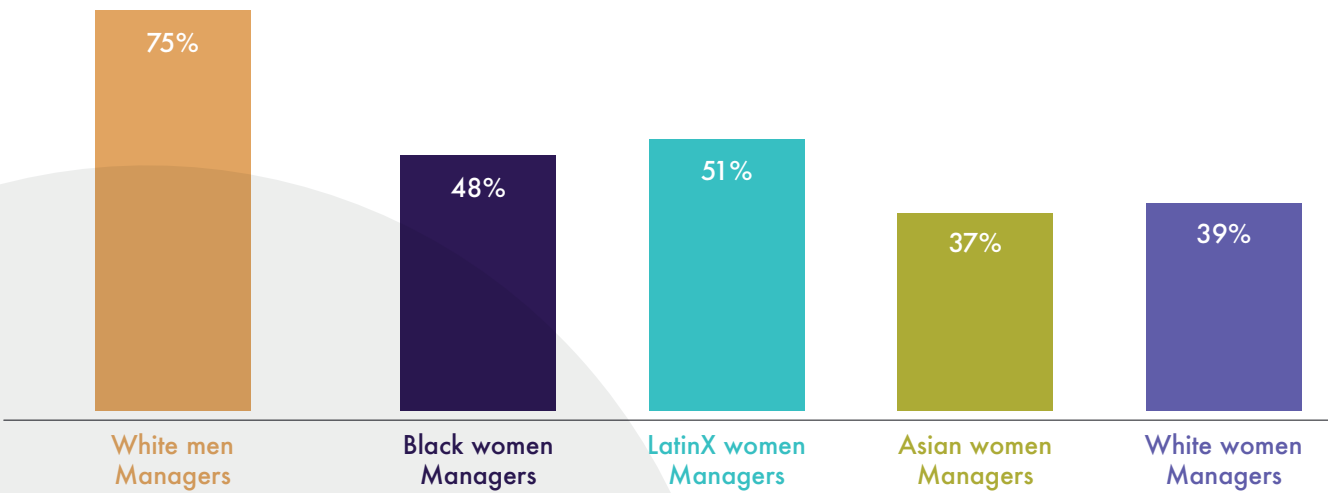


The authors believe that honest feedback is helpful to thriving on the job, especially in stretch assignments.

- 75% of the white male managers said that they were receiving helpful feedback.
 - 51% of the LatinX female managers reported that they too received helpful feedback.
- Majorities of the other races of female managers indicated that they were not receiving helpful feedback.

MANAGERS: HELPFUL/AVAILABLE FEEDBACK

Yes



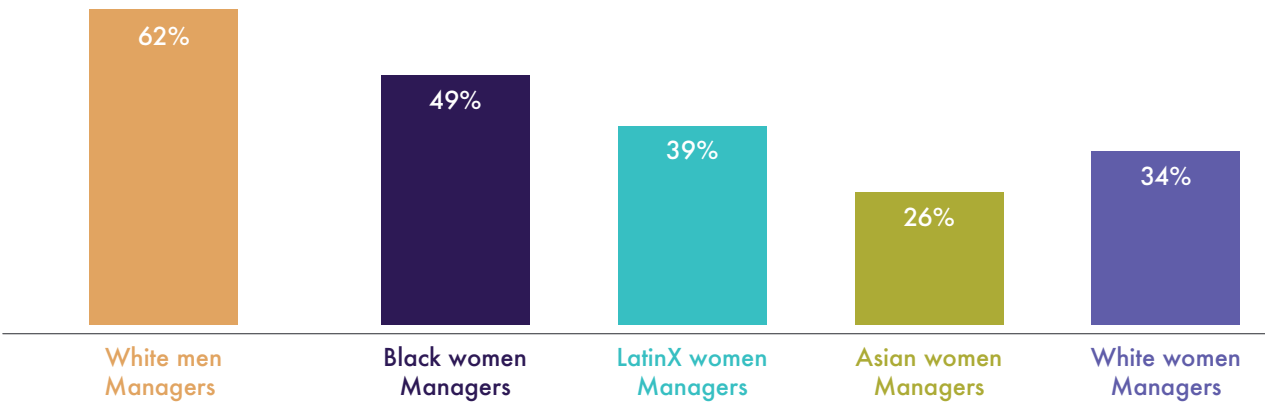
Having someone to turn to for honest feedback and career advice is essential for successfully navigating a stretch assignment.

- Consistent with the findings on feedback, 62% of white male managers reported that they had someone to turn to for career advice.
- Majorities of the female managers of all colors said that they did not.

The implication is that managers and supervisors, as well as desk workers, need allies and sponsors for honest feedback. They need trusted career advisors when navigating issues in the workplace as they strive to grow there.

MANAGERS: ACCESS TO CAREER ADVICE

Yes - A great deal



9. Sisterhood

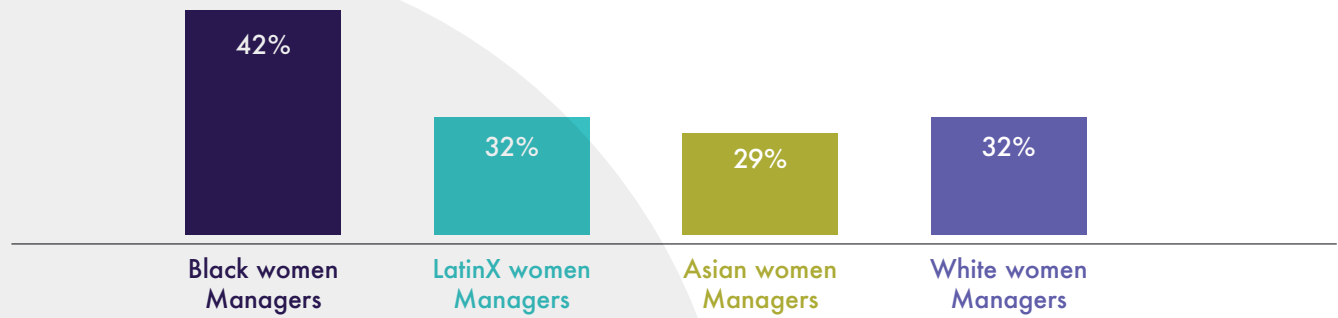
In their 2020 Survey, the authors asked female managers about a subject that had proven extremely important for younger desk workers across all races: sisterhood. The authors see sisterhood as a major component of their overarching theme of women of color “teaming up.”

- Unlike the younger cohorts who reported near-unanimous support for the concept of women helping one another, only Black female managers offered strong support for the concept of sisterhood at 42%.

SISTERHOOD AND FEMALE MANAGERS

How has what some people call “sisterhood” been to you at work – in other words, other women, perhaps of the same race as you, who share good and bad times, exchange advice, and listen through each other’s issues?

Very Important



10. Allies by gender and race

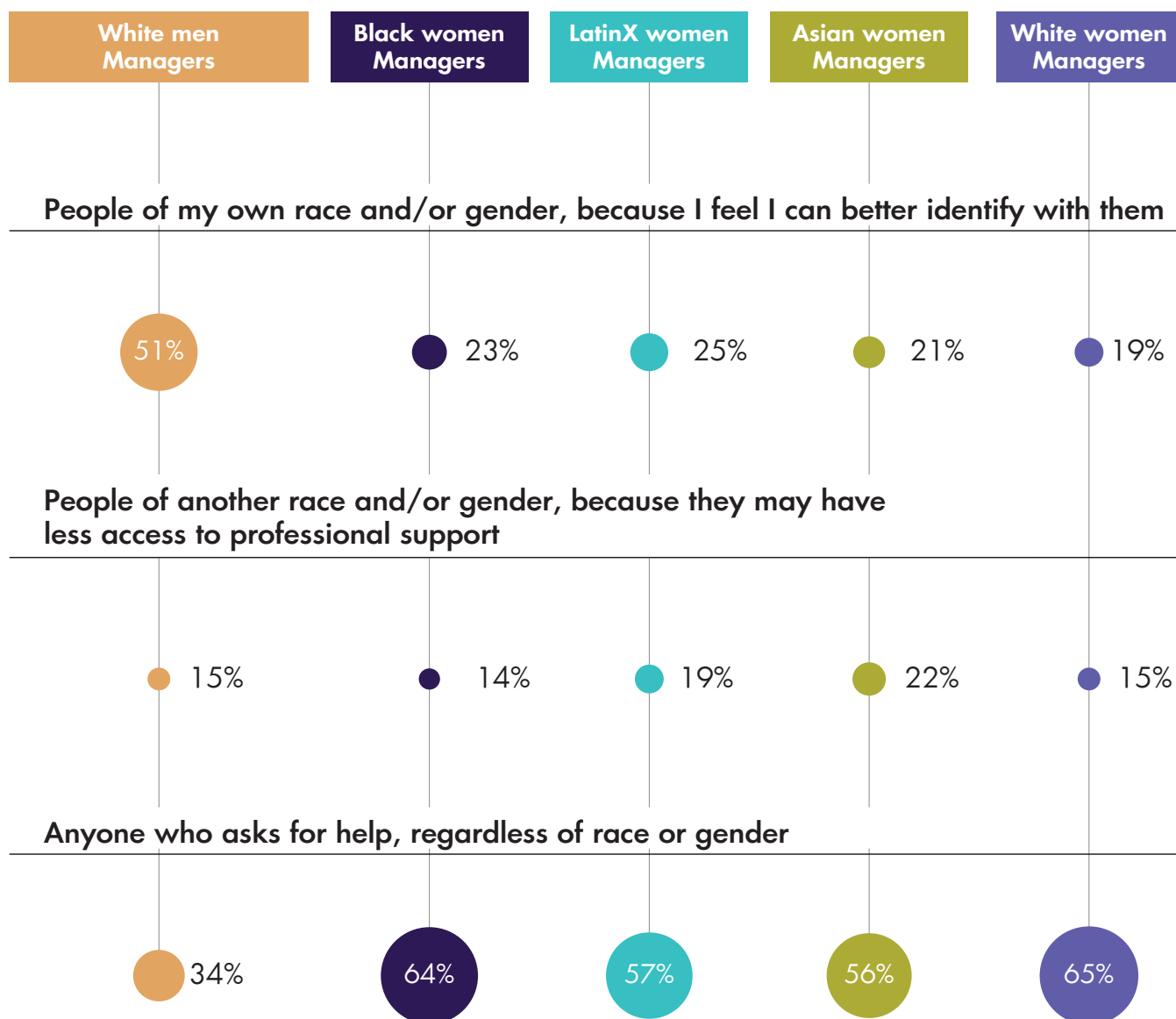
The authors looked at allies from two perspectives: from whom do you seek advice/mentoring, and whom do you mentor/support professionally.

Majorities of white male managers reported that they both helped and sought assistance from other white men. 51% said they helped and 61% said they would seek help from other white men “because I feel that I can better identify with them.”

This finding is perhaps at the heart of the authors' message to white male allies, their challenge to corporate leaders. "Inclusive" and "empathetic" senior leaders as well as managers must be eager to find and reward talent among people who do not look like themselves. Success will demand leaders who seek and bring out the best from all.

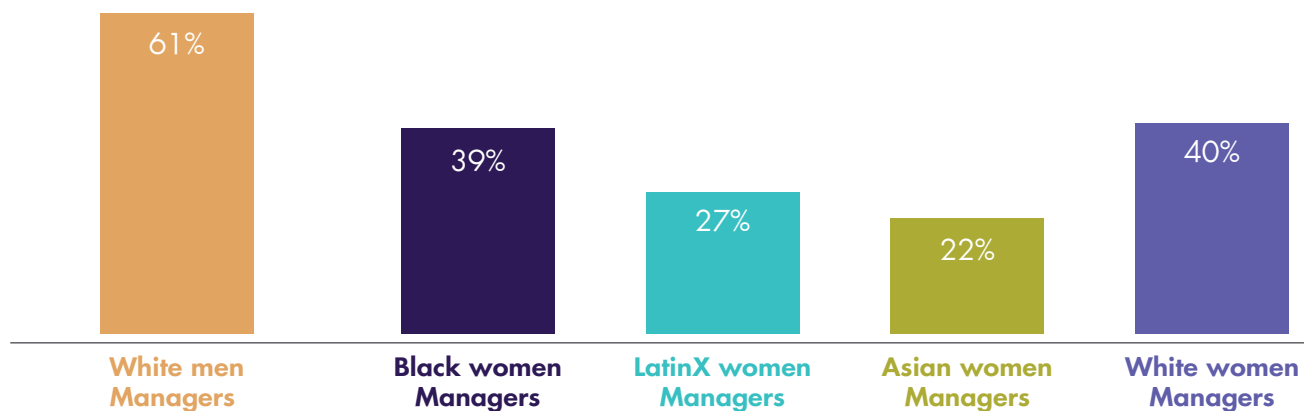
However, these findings also suggest a need to recognize the fear and discomfort that some white male managers may be feeling and the need to create psychologically safe places for them to embrace inclusivity and empathy.

MANAGERS: WHOM DO YOU MENTOR PROFESSIONALLY - PEOPLE OF MY OWN RACE/GENDER OR ANYONE WHO ASKS



MANAGERS: FROM WHOM DO YOU SEEK CAREER ADVICE - SAME RACE/GENDER

My same race/ethnicity and same gender



Large majorities of the female managers of all races did not report that they sought advice primarily from members of their own race or gender. The women were more magnanimous. 64% of Black and 65% of white female managers said they have mentored and supported professionally “anyone who asks for help, regardless of race or gender.” 57% of LatinX and 56% of Asian female managers agreed.

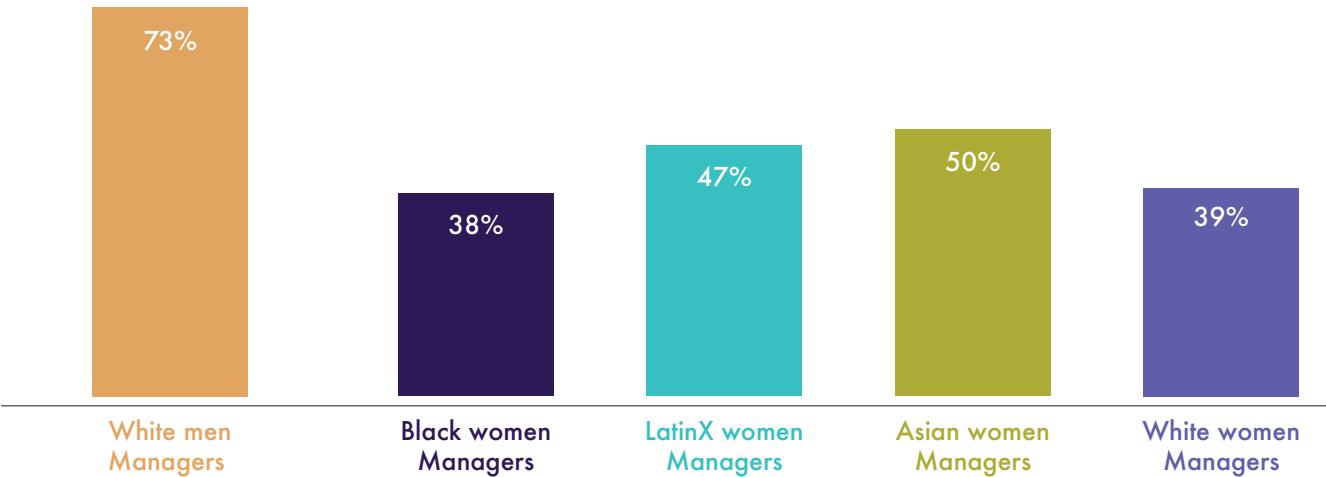
11. Achieving the American Dream

The American Dream is defined in a number of ways, but almost all involve hard work and professional success.

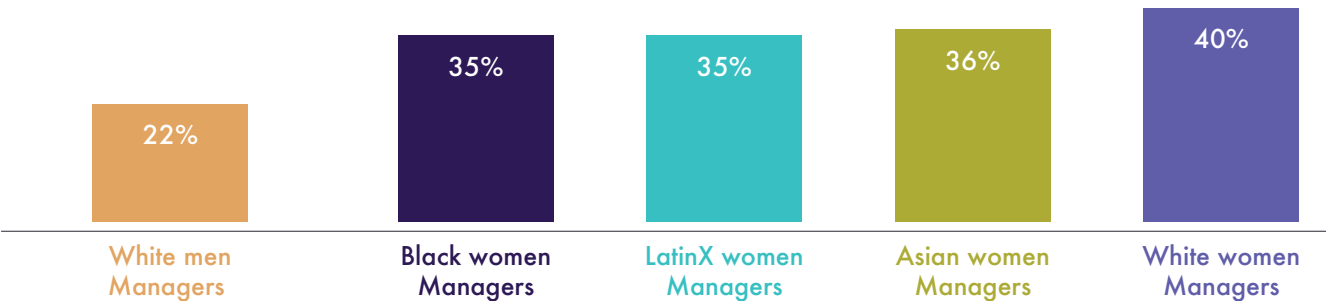
- The vast majority of the white male managers, 73%, strongly agreed that this dream is within their reach. Another 22% somewhat agreed.
- The female managers of all races were less sure.
 - 50% of Asian and 47% of LatinX female managers most strongly agreed that the American dream was achievable through hard work.
 - 39% of white and 38% of Black female managers were closely aligned in the “strongly agree” category.

MANAGERS: IF I WORK HARD ENOUGH, I CAN ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM

Strongly agree



Somewhat agree



Take the #TeamUp Challenges

After analyzing all of their data over two years, the authors have come up with a series of challenges for both managers and individual desk workers. These challenges are intended to help everyone “lead, empower, and thrive” in their workplaces.

Challenge #1

For Senior Leaders and Managers:

Many senior leaders and their managers have mastered IQ (intelligence) and EQ (emotional intelligence). We challenge both leaders and managers to develop greater awareness of CQ (cultural intelligence, as defined by [Deloitte](#)). CQ involves understanding the reality of someone who is 's different, by gender or race or socio-economic upbringing, from the manager.

Discomfort is necessary when you're building physical muscles. The same is true with leadership muscles.

Goals:

- 1) In your annual performance appraisal, demonstrate that you have improved your cultural intelligence by recording in your self-assessment what you have done to enhance belonging for everyone but especially for your employees of color in the workplace. Be honest and be specific with your personal impact.**
- 2) Flatten the wave of manager variability and inclusive inconsistency. Reward the managers who hold themselves accountable for improving the outcomes for their women of color employees.**
- 3) Rank managers based on self-assessment and other quantitative factors. Commit to an inclusive leaderboard that tracks underrepresented minority performers, including any bottom performers. Eliminate the 10% of managers and leaders who do not improve their “manager excellence” indicators based on the inclusiveness and well-being of their teams.**

Conclusion

As outlined in both the 2019 and 2020 Women of Color in Business: Cross-Generational Survey®, the active engagement of senior leaders as well as managers is “table stakes” for nurturing the highest level of productivity among all women of color while creating a true sense of belonging in the workplace. The data indicate that white male managers now have a heightened sense of awareness around racial matters brought to the surface in 2020 as the world watched the harrowing death of George Floyd.

Adam Grant, an organizational psychologist from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a best-selling author, explained how and why psychological safety is so critical in this leadership moment. “Psychological safety is not relaxing your standards, feeling comfortable, being nice and agreeable, or giving unconditional praise. Psychological safety is a culture of respect, trust, and openness where it’s not risky to raise ideas and concerns.”

[Mckinsey and Co.’s recent study of psychological safety](#) also confirmed this powerful leadership trait. “Team leaders are more likely to exhibit supportive, consultative and challenging leadership if their senior leaders demonstrate inclusiveness, for example, by seeking out opinions that might differ from their own and by treating others with respect. Cultural awareness was in the top category for senior leader inclusiveness.”

The future successes for leaders and managers belong to those willing to harness the data, recognize the generational diversity nuances, and bring accountability to the table. The future will shine brightly for those transformational leaders and managers who invest in themselves to serve as role models and/or allies to lift the capability bar for all leaders, while illuminating the talent of those “hidden in plain sight.”

To reduce variability of leadership capability across managers and supervisors, companies should actively engage in training modules informed by the new generational diversity trends.

