



**NEWS RELEASE  
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THE THINKUBATOR**

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The Thinkubator Interns and The Think Tank produce a paper on challenges in the advertising profession. Stories from the Field.

Bronx, New York: The Thinkubator's Think Tank under the leadership of Dr. Lessie Branch, Director and Dr. Duleep Deosthale, Director of Higher Education Consultancy released a paper in collaboration with two interns on the barriers to building a diverse workforce and documenting the lived experiences and challenges faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the advertising sector. The paper leverages its findings to recommend a more just work environment, policies, and procedures that are inclusive and designed to eliminate racial and gender stereotyping and discrimination.

The Thinkubator interns and team developed and conducted two online surveys to assess racial and gender discrimination in the advertising industry. Participants were informed that the survey was on accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in the advertising production and commercial production industry and were encouraged to provide honest, confidential responses. Participants for the first survey were recruited via LinkedIn while for the second survey they were recruited via SurveyMonkey. Participants for both surveys were employees in the advertising industry. The first survey yielded 17 responses and the second survey yielded 95 responses. Survey questions were designed by student interns at The Thinkubator based on the research literature examining racial and gender inequalities in advertising as well as based on conversations with their advisors at The Thinkubator. The questions aimed to assess critical research questions around diversity, equity, discrimination, and about crafting policies and strategies to deal with stated challenges. Additionally, the interns interviewed some participants who stated in the survey that they would be willing to participate in an interview.

Based on the research findings, The Think Tank recommend the following:

- The advertising industry needs to address a diverse set of racial and gender equity pay and positional gaps;
- Hiring practices need to change;
- The industry should reevaluate the treatment of employees, and create benchmarks and deadlines to start making an equity shift;



- Hire more women of color;
- Change the existing work culture to be more inclusive;
- Expand the pipeline for BIPOC people seeking advertising positions via scholarships and internships;
- Change employees' behavior via training and setting zero-tolerance policies for harassment and discrimination, which are equally important;
- Create a culture of accountability, meaning that bias reduction and diversity training needs to be tied to evaluations of work performance and to promotions and raises;
- Partner with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as well as with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and make a concerted effort in diversifying their employee application pool.

**Dr. Edward Summers, CEO and President of The Thinkubator** stated that “this study is significant in that our youth were the ones who carried out the research, analysis, writing, and recommendations. They played a significant role in learning about how to ask good questions to answer their research questions. The Thinkubator prides itself on the development and elevation of our young adults and training them for careers in the research area.”

**Dr. Lessie Branch, Director, The Think Tank at The Thinkubator** added, “I love that the authors of this work ‘call out’ the lack of BIPOC representation in the U.S. advertising and commercial production industries. But they don’t stop there; they ‘call in’ ways to address these disparities through their insightful and well articulated policy recommendations!”

**Dr. Duleep Deosthale, Director, Higher Education Consultancy at The Thinkubator** added, “It is the maturity and objective thought process of these young minds, and a good understanding of the realities around them and a methodological approach, that adds credibility to their recommendations.”

**Luna Bella Avila, Youth and Alumni Engagement at The Thinkubator,**

“As the survey project developed, the junior consultants got an opportunity to use their newly developed skills and unique POV to overcome the types of challenges an analysis project can bring. And they developed solutions that only young enterprising minds can come up with.”



More about The Think Tank at The Thinkubator:

The Think Tank at The Thinkubator, launched by Dr. Lessie Branch, Director of Programs Community Relations at Citizens Committee for New York City, serves as a hub for rigorous academic, scholarly, and professional research that supports the documentation and evaluation of The Thinkubator activities, seeks to understand The Bronx as a contested, complex urban form, and addresses narratives of marginalized - Black, Brown, Female, and low-income communities. The Think Tank conducts research and analysis, provides youth with a platform to conduct and produce research, and produces policy briefs and reports for public discourse.

More about The Thinkubator

The Thinkubator is a Bronx-based innovation and workforce development nonprofit organization. We craft innovative strategies to complex local challenges that have global implications. The Thinkubator approaches our work with a racial and economic equity lens through three major areas: education, research, and community.