

SHOWING UP FOR BLACK AND HISPANIC CONSUMERS IN RETAIL

An Ipsos Point of View

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GAME CHANGERS



KEY FINDINGS:

- Black and Hispanic Americans are more likely to report experiencing many different sides of discrimination and profiling in in-person retail settings.
- Money does not change people's experience with race in retail settings. Most affluent Black people have felt profiled or negatively stereotyped while shopping at some point.
- It is important for business leaders to recognize the experiences and needs of different demographics to best serve them.

As the holiday shopping season gets underway, more consumers are returning to in-person shopping. With that, retailers, store managers, and employees have a responsibility to disrupt and prevent microaggressions, race-based profiling and other types of discrimination in their stores.

Discrimination has influenced every part of American life, stretching into the past and present. It materializes in the overwhelming number of everyday indignities that happen when shopping while Black, for example. And, undeniably, this legacy and longstanding practice of discrimination goes deeper, setting the stage for where we are now. Centuries of systematically excluding Black, Hispanic, and other marginalized people from the acquisition of wealth and material goods has produced a staggering wealth gap and a culture of exclusion that still exists today.

Yet, more than ever, Black and Hispanic consumers make up a large and growing consumer market. Some estimates put the buying power of these consumers in the [billions](#) or even in the [trillions](#).

To best connect with these groups, companies cannot forget this history of racism in retail and that Black and Hispanic Americans still experience heightened discrimination and profiling in retail spaces. We detail what those experiences look like and some things companies can do to disrupt this cycle.

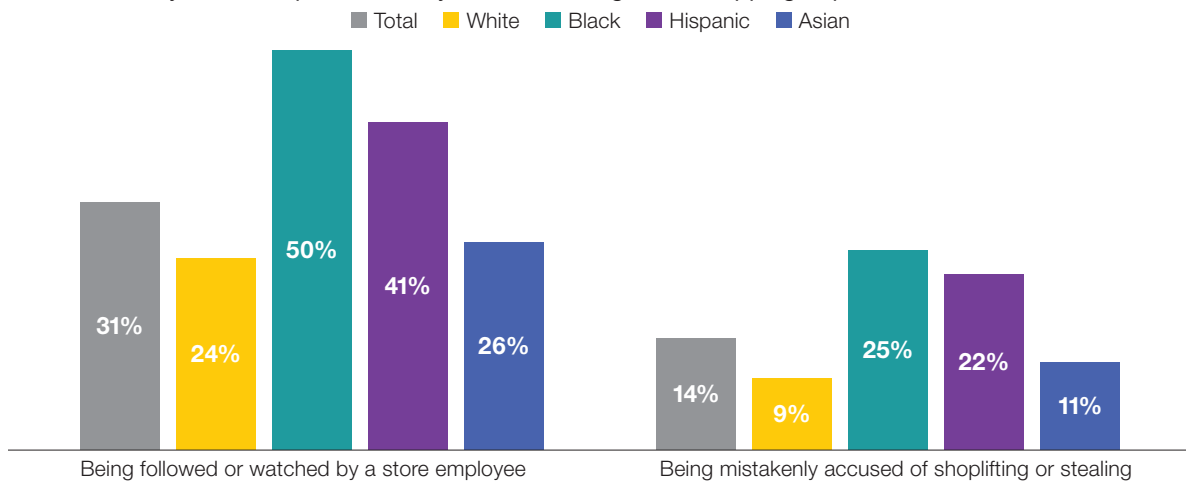
Experiences with racism in retail

Overall, Black and Hispanic Americans are more likely to report experiencing many different types of discrimination and profiling in [in-person retail settings](#). Twice as many Black respondents (50%) than white ones (24%) report being followed or watched by a store employee. Similarly, more Hispanic (41%) than white Americans share this experience too.

Alarmingly, one in four Black and Hispanic Americans say they've been mistakenly accused of shoplifting or stealing. Compare that to the one in ten white or Asian respondents who've had the same experience.

Black and Hispanic Americans more likely to have been mistakenly accused of shoplifting or stealing

Have you ever experienced any of the following while shopping in-person at a store?—Yes



Source: Ipsos Consumer Tracker, August 30–31, 2022. Survey of 1,110 U.S. adults.

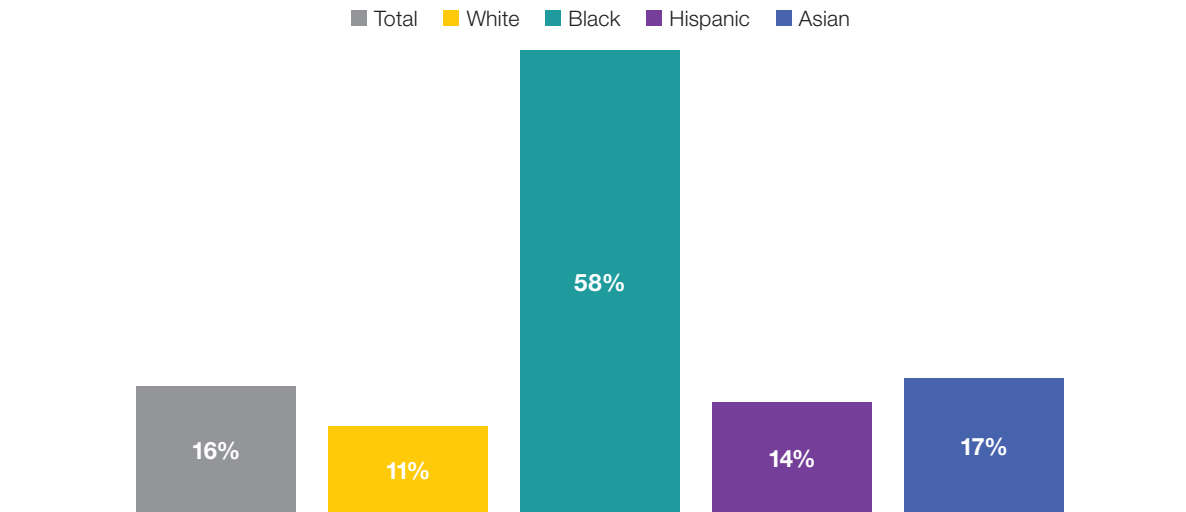


Money does not change people's experience with race in retail settings, particularly for Black Americans. Most affluent Black people have felt profiled or negatively stereotyped while shopping at some point.

While slightly over one in ten white or Hispanic affluent Americans share this experience, three in five Black Americans have felt this way in a retail setting, according to the Q2 wave of the Ipsos Affluent Survey Barometer.

Most affluent Black Americans have been profiled or negatively stereotyped while shopping

Percent who have felt profiled or negatively stereotyped while shopping among those who have a household income of over \$125K



Source: Ipsos Spring 2022, Ipsos Affluent Survey

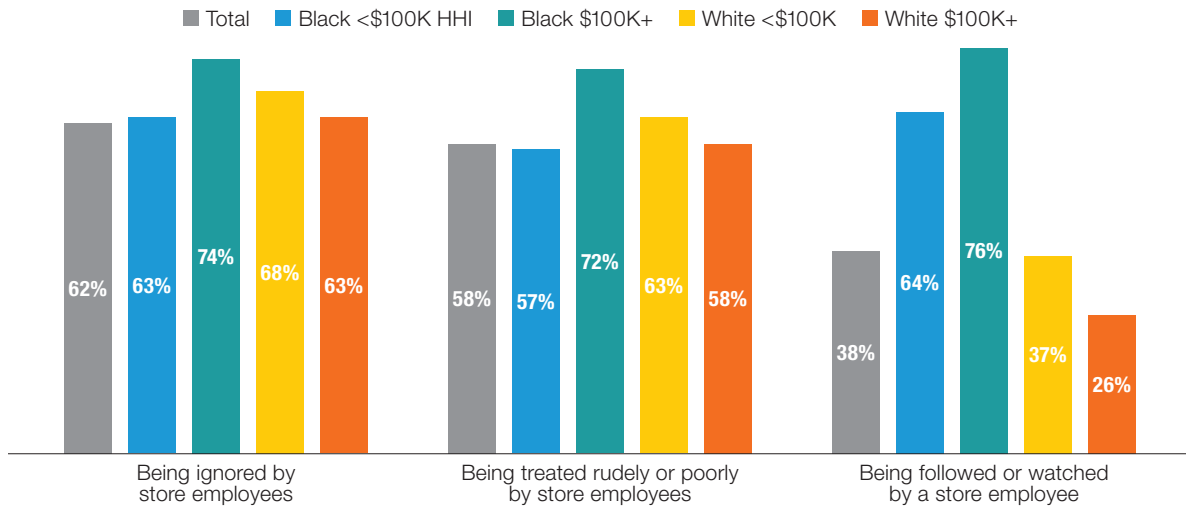


Other Ipsos polling from 2021 finds that more Black Americans with a household income over \$100K than those making less than that report experiencing being followed or watched by store employees, being ignored by store employees, and being treated rudely or poorly by store employees, according to the [Axios/Ipsos Hard Truths survey](#).

Reacting to these findings, Kip Davis, Director at Ipsos and expert in the affluent consumer, says “less affluent Black Americans have lower expectations when it comes to the retail experience, while affluent Black shoppers come with the expectation that their wealth will make a difference.” He explains that “[Affluent Black Americans] are also more likely to patronize high-end stores where the presence of a Black consumer is not the norm.”

Majorities of Black affluent consumers reported being ignored, treated rudely, or followed by store employees

Have you ever experienced the following while shopping or at a retail establishment? — Yes



Source: Axios/Ipsos Hard Truth Civil Rights Poll, conducted April 28–May 4, 2021



What Black and Hispanic consumers are looking for

In particular, Ipsos' research illustrates just how important retail shopping, being well dressed, and overall presentation are for Black consumers. According to Ipsos' Senior Vice President Janelle James that may be, in part, driven by "how unwelcome they [Black people] can feel in many spaces, the microaggressions they experience, and how much more harshly their presentation is compared to other races and ethnicities."

So, what can companies do?

- 1. Remember systemic discrimination is always there.** Many of your Black and Hispanic customers have been profiled and stereotyped in retail settings. Don't lose sight of that reality. Learn how policies and practices not centered on Black and marginalized experiences can cause harm.
- 2. Cultivate inclusive in-person experiences.** Train in-store workers to disrupt profiling and other conscious or unconscious biases. Consider what kinds of mannequins they have in-store. Create visual displays, models, and clothes that are reflective of your customer base as physical reminders to employees and consumers about who is included in your brand.
- 3. Proactively communicate and listen.** Show who you envision as a consumer. Be explicit. Do not make assumptions about your consumers, and instead listen to their voices to better understand their experience and needs.
- 4. Avoid thinking of any group as a monolith.** Identity is complicated, personal, and intersectional. Being 'Black,' 'Hispanic' or 'white' is mediated and changed by the other identities someone holds, like gender, sexuality, ability, income, etc. When engaging with consumers, think fully about who you are speaking with and how race and other identities impact those interactions.

And perhaps related to these shared experiences with profiling and discrimination, it is important for many Black and Hispanic consumers to shop at stores that provide a high level of personalized attention. Even more look for superior service when they shop, according to the Spring 2022 Ipsos Affluent Survey. It is important for business leaders to recognize the experiences and needs of these demographics to best serve them.



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