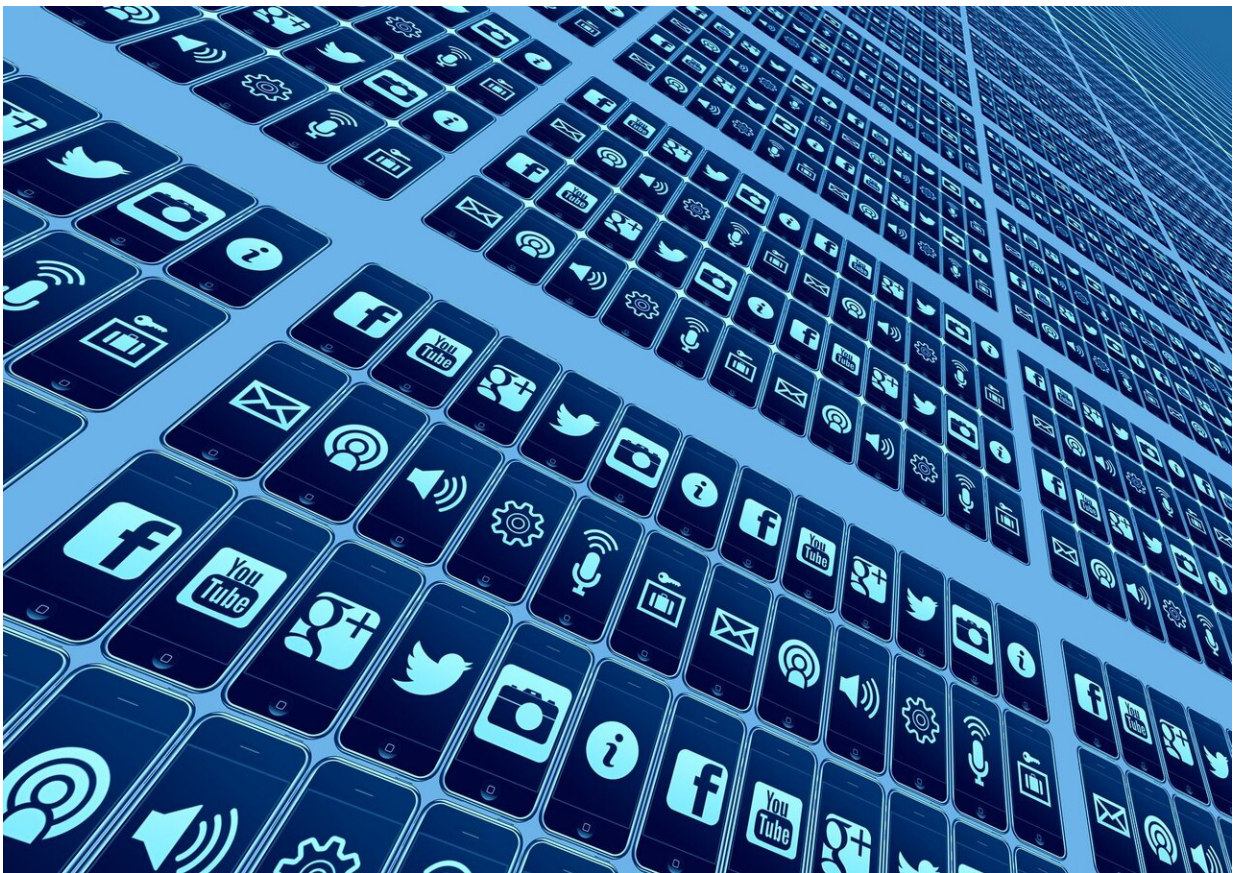


# Black Facebook employees complain racism, discrimination has gotten worse

November 11 2019, by Jessica Guynn, Usa Today

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

An anonymous memo alleging Facebook still has a black people problem is circulating inside the company one year after a former employee

complained of racism and discrimination there.

The Medium post from 12 current and former employees, first reported by Business Insider, details a number of racist incidents, suggesting morale has sunk even lower since Mark Luckie published his Facebook post about discrimination on the company's Silicon Valley campus and on the social media giant's platform.

Both missives expose the racial fault lines in the mostly white tech industry and how the stubbornly persistent lack of representation and agency of [black people](#) inside Facebook directly affects how black people on Facebook and its other platforms are treated.

"We may be smiling. We may post on Instagram with industry influencers and celebrities. We may use the IG "Share Black Stories" filter and be featured on marketing pieces. We may embrace each other and share how happy we are to have the opportunity to work with a company that impacts nearly three billion people," the anonymous memo says. "On the inside, we are sad. Angry. Oppressed. Depressed. And treated every day through the micro and macro aggressions as if we do not belong here."

The timing was awkward for Facebook, which held a summit with hundreds of black employees where Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg talked about "the importance of inclusion and empowerment." Many of the black employees planned to then attend the Afro Tech conference in Oakland.

Bertie Thomson, vice president of corporate communications, apologized in an emailed statement.

"No one at Facebook, or anywhere, should have to put up with this behavior. We are sorry. It goes against everything that we stand for as a

company. We're listening and working hard to do better," Thomson said.

Inside the company, Facebook has made a show of recruiting more diverse talent, but not much has changed over the past year "to ensure that people are recognized, empowered, and overall treated equitably by their managers and peers," the Medium post says. "In fact, things have gotten worse."

The 12 current and former black employees offered up a long list of microaggressions, the weight of which they say builds over time.

Two white employees asked a black program manager to clean up after they finished eating breakfast. Other black employees describe a hostile work environment in which people of color are treated as "aggressive, angry and abnormal" and managers focus on negative feedback, criticize how black employees speak in meetings or inform employees they should be more reserved and respectful. On Blind, the app that allows Facebook employees to post anonymous experiences, black employees say they are treated with aggression by their colleagues.

"Racism, discrimination, bias, and aggression do not come from the big moments. It's in the small actions that mount up over time and build into a culture where we are only meant to be seen as quotas, but never heard, never acknowledged, never recognized, and never accepted," the Medium post reads. "By contrast, our colleagues in the majority populations have been elevated, celebrated, and promoted for doing less than the work we have been tasked to do."

The current and former employees say they must remain anonymous because "anyone that is non-white is made to feel fear for their job and their safety to report any bad behaviors."

The treatment of people of color inside Facebook has an impact on

members of marginalized groups on its platforms, current and former employees say.

U.S. TODAY has reported extensively on the experience of black users on Facebook who say hate speech policies and content moderation systems formulated by a company built by and dominated by white men fail the very people Facebook says it's trying to protect. Not only are the voices of marginalized groups disproportionately stifled, Facebook rarely takes action on repeated reports of racial slurs, violent threats and harassment campaigns targeting black users, they told U.S. TODAY.

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