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I am BLACK. I am Latinx. I am CEO of Cook Ross Inc.

We are ready for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Social Justice (IDEAS).

Businesses are grappling during these difficult times in the aftermath of COVID-19 to reopen, rebuild and refocus themselves in such a way that reflects their values. However, exposed wounds of racial injustice, political unrest, policing tactics and growing inequalities and economic frustrations for Black and brown communities are now no longer in the shadows but front and center in our neighborhoods, communities and in many cases at the storefronts of large, medium and small businesses and organizations. “Going back to business” is now requiring business leaders to reflect on the race equity work it will take to reopen, rebuild, and refocus themselves in ways that meet the future we are all marching towards.

People are Hurting, Businesses are Hurting. To be solutions-oriented, we advise businesses that now is the time for **Advocacy, Activism, and Allyship**. Businesses can do something and say something to take stronger steps to help reopen, rebuild, and refocus.

Activism:

1. Challenge leaders in large, small and government organizations or businesses to develop an action plan to first name the problem e.g. inequity in our organization’s processes – hiring, sourcing, community engagement and/or systemic racism in the way we target, communicate with and legislate to the advantage of Whites and disadvantage of Black and Brown people. Secondly, assess policies and practices with a critical eye to who has and continues to benefit from inequity.

Allyship:

2. Publish, communicate and get feedback from marginalized employees and communities. **Transparency** (“We are trying to get this right – quickly, but don’t know what we don’t know), **Authenticity** (“We have been comfortable ignoring questions, issues and problems that did not affect us – and we intend to behave differently”), **Humility** (“We are responsible for the culture of our organization or business and we need your patience – understandably you’re running low on it, even though we have often dismissed it when offered.”)

Advocacy:

3. Read, watch, circulate and discuss articles, books, videos that present solutions – first, and this is important – do it with those whose review, promotions and salaries you *directly* impact. If White men (still the predominate leaders in the majority of private and government organizations) are not educated they cannot be expected to lead in thoughtful, inclusive and effective ways. Learning and education cannot be optional – history tells us that has never worked. Psychological safety, values and ethics, and quality are successful in organizations only when it is not *optional*.

We stand with the Black Community. We stand for racial justice. We stand for equity. Now is the time to end systemic racism. We are your partner at Cook Ross. Connect at lookingforanswers@cookross.com or www.cookross.com.

Cook Ross is a full-service consulting firm with more than 30 years of domestic and global experience addressing organizational development issues. We have deep expertise in bias, inclusive leadership and diversity and inclusion strategy in the workplace. We partner with organizations to transform their cultures to meet their inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility needs for today and the future.