

A SEAT AT THE TABLE:

*A Perspective on Women of Color
in the Music Business*

presents

PUB ROYALTY QUEEN



Podcast



“Describe what you can bring to this company.”

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In periods of awakening throughout history, society is faced with uncomfortable truths. In 2020, the world experienced a connectivity that stemmed from a pandemic which forced all of us into isolation. During this time, we all bore witness to an uprising of activism led by an unveiling of blatant disregard for human life as even in our most vulnerable time, racism persisted. It is through our collective empathy that we upheld ourselves and institutions to a higher standard; one where we assess who we are vs. who we strive to be.

Music is the connection that breeds inclusivity as it secures a bond through emotional experiences expressed by all at some point or other. Most notable evergreens or classics derive from hardship and emotional trauma. While there are layers to oppression, some of the most resilient people on earth are those in marginalized communities who, through limited resources, captivate audiences and listeners from around the globe. And yet, their stories fall victim to the status quo; consumerism led by a capitalistic society.

However, in the age of information technology, the acceptance of ignorance as bliss has proven detrimental, ultimately affecting the bottom line; more and more corporations are seeking diverse perspectives to drive profits & amass greater audiences. This gives disenfranchised groups of people & privileged alike an opportunity to find commonality & alas bring balance, unity, and allyship to the music industry.

It is a responsibility and my civic duty to utilize the platforms that create safe spaces for women of color to express themselves and collect both anecdotal & statistical data in order to bring awareness to socio & economic issues affecting them. I look forward to the developments that become of these services to amplify their voices!

*Foreward by
Janishia C. Jones*



A Seat at the Table Market Research Agency

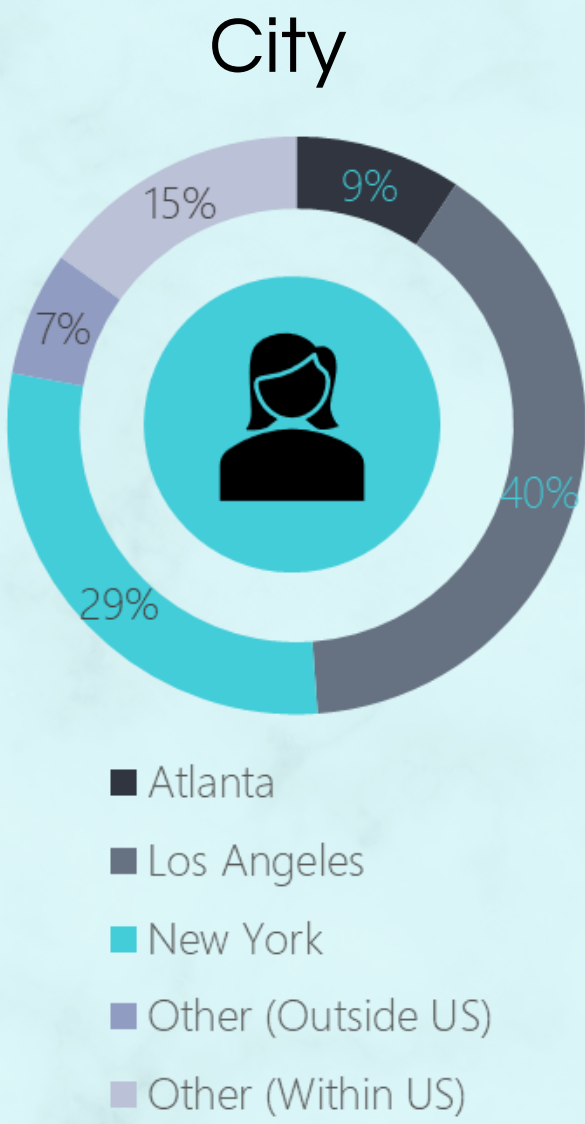
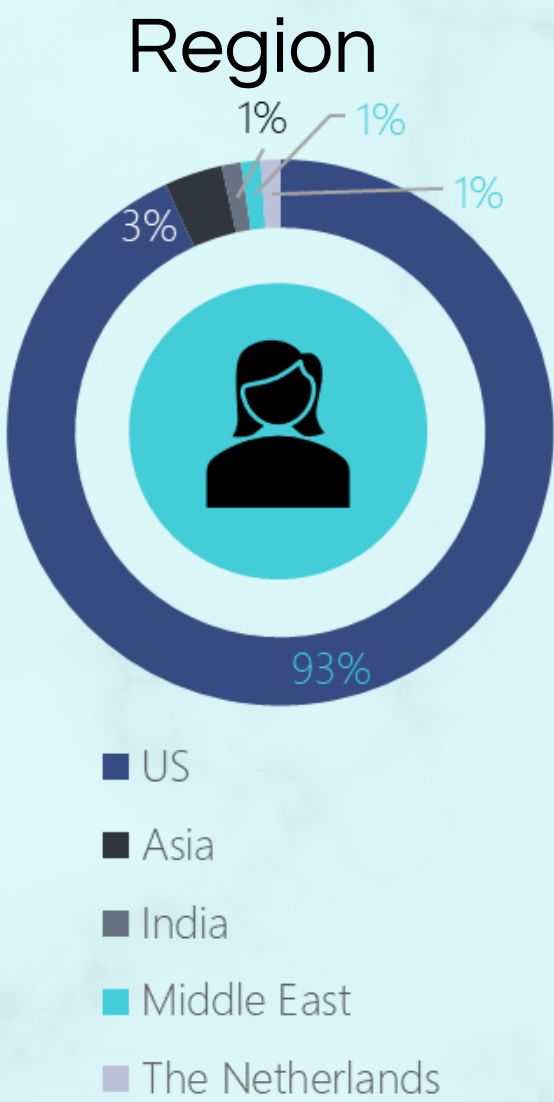
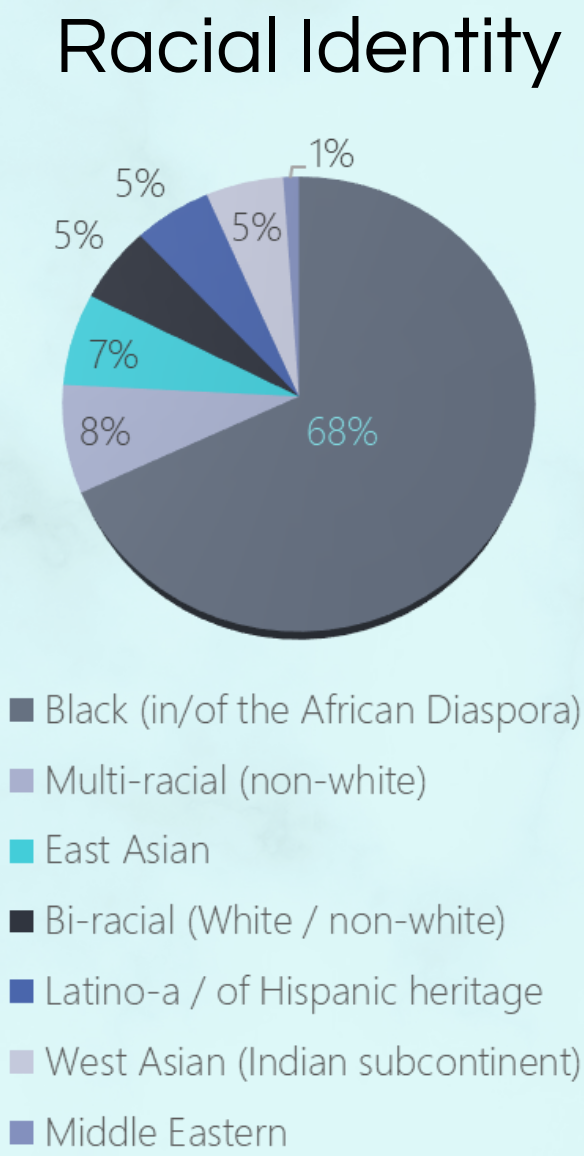
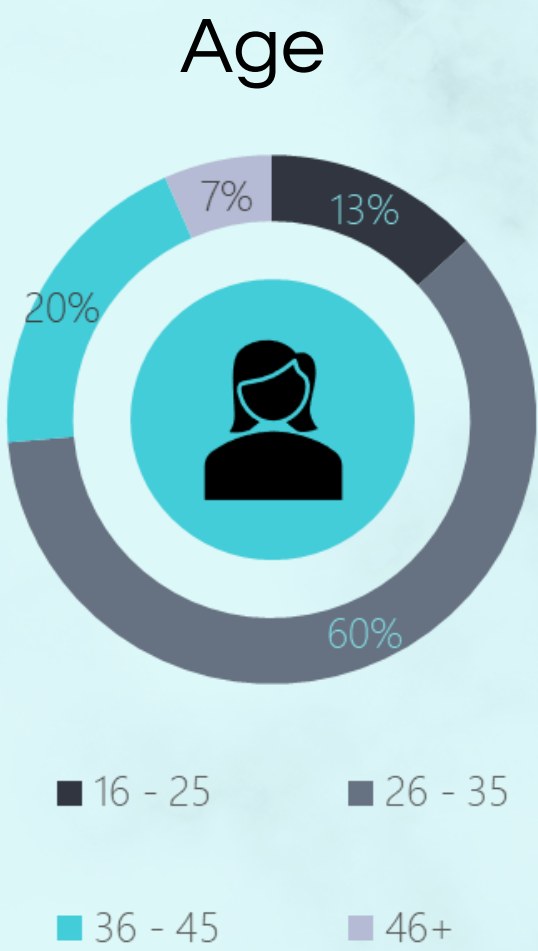
A Seat at the Table Market Research Agency is a market intelligence and consulting firm founded by Data Scientist and Music Publishing expert, Janishia Jones. The agency derives from activism & creating safe spaces for people of color. The agency aims to provide statistical data on varying sectors within the music community. As the first of its kind, clients gain access to data & insight into untapped demographics to aid in adjusting cultural narratives around the world.

About the Survey

This survey was conducted in April 2022, in collaboration with MIDiA Research Agency, distributed on the web, and assisted by a variety of music industry associations, networks and influencers who are working directly on issues faced by women and people of color. As this study is about gender, identity, and social roles as self identified by respondents, all references to male / female, men / women, etc. qualitatively refer to gender, not biological sex.

Women & other non-male genders refers to the group inclusive of women, non-binary, gender fluid, and other identities that are not exclusively male. The study which surveys the experiences of participants identifying as a person of color, precludes white race identifying respondents. The study excludes performing artists, musicians, and producers. Finally, the survey focuses on the working age around the world with respondents being 16 years or older.

Demographics



Introduction

A Seat at the Table: A Perspective on Women of Color in the Music Business is a response to the spaces being held to create opportunities for change. A bridge to bring insight into the lives of whom have been silenced as we seek to find understanding amongst each other in the music community. The stories of those at the intersection of racial & gender biases are no longer just vehicles for profit, but a reckoning for ways in which to restore equity. With an open mind & heart, we heal as only music can do.

There are many nuances faced within intersectionality which may not be experienced by the larger public & thus warrants investigative action. In this study, we surveyed over 100 women of color around the world to discover challenges within various facets of their lives as they navigate the white male-dominated industry known as the music business. The following is a glimpse of their overall well-being as well as solutions for creating meaningful change.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Women of color in the music business overwhelmingly invest in higher levels of education; however, acquire student loan debt in order to fund their education. Beginning their careers without established relationships and through unpaid internships creates a direct economic challenge & barrier to entry.
- Mentorship is severely lacking for women of color in the music business as they tend not to receive formal feedback from direct managers / supervisors and often do not occupy leadership positions which can lend itself to advocating for each other for promotional opportunities and advancement.
- Most women of color in the music business do not feel that the media represents them in a positive light which reflects back through subconscious biases displayed in the boardroom & tie into how they advocate for themselves for work/life balance, career advancement, and fair pay.
- Women of color most often occupy creative / front-facing roles as compared to technical roles, limiting themselves to less earnings potential over time. Operational roles are often neglected due to a lack of representation.
- The music industry does not provide economic security for women of color who often seek out supplemental income to offset living expenses.
- Women of color in the music industry are not prone to being in romantic partnerships or having children due to the responsibility and financial burden.
- The music industry needs to create more opportunities for women of color to advance into leadership positions, allowing them to be key decision makers and to have access to opportunities more often offered to white & male counterparts.

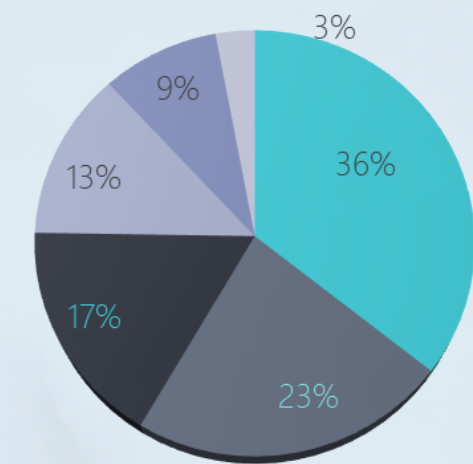


WOMEN OF COLOR: INVESTING IN THEIR FUTURES

Barriers to Entry

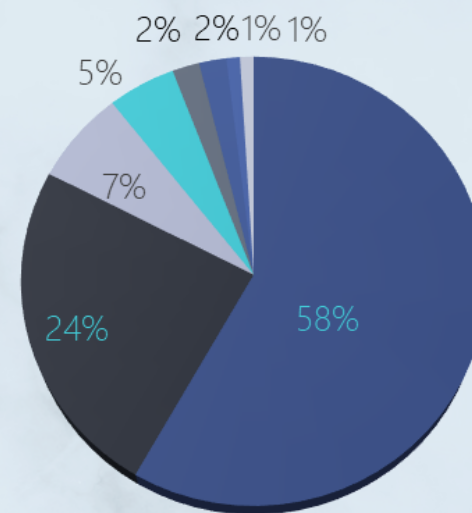
Education

What was your main source of funding your education?



■ Student Loans
■ Not applicable / Prefer not to say
■ Self-funded
■ Family support
■ Scholarships
■ Work / Study program

What is your highest level of education?



■ Bachelor's Degree
■ Master's Degree
■ Some College
■ Professional Degree
■ Associate's Degree
■ Doctorate Degree
■ HS Diploma
■ None

Barriers to entry play a significant role in access afforded to women of color in the music industry. With 60% being introduced to the music business through unpaid internships, the lack of direct relationships have caused 85% of women of color to rely on hiring staff within music companies to secure placement. Although just over half (51.5%) of WOC believe that a college-degree was even necessary for their current line of work, 91% of women of color have earned at least one degree of higher education with the majority (35.6%) receiving a Bachelor's degree. This perhaps speaks to the values that marginalized groups of people place on education in societies where it is used as a form of systemic oppression.

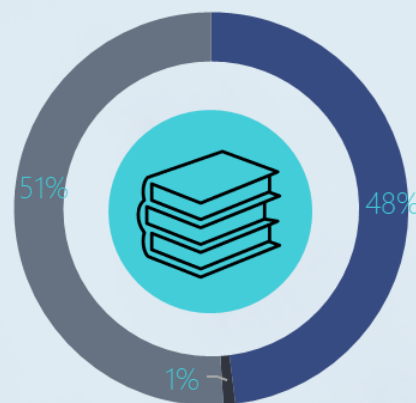
However, the most concerning issue is that more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of all educational funding stem from entering into student loan debt which demonstrates a direct economic disadvantage. Data shows that interning impacts your total earnings over time; however, with Los Angeles & New York containing more than 60% of all survey respondents, we must recognize the privilege in seeking opportunities in these major metropolitan areas and provide benefits which can offset the cost of living & offer competitive wages accordingly.

Moreover, while funding initiatives for music programming at historically black colleges & universities are highly recommended & prevalent in wake of racial injustices, only 12% of WOC in the music industry have attended an HBCU and of those, less than half believe attending an HBCU has aided in their success in the music industry (ie. network, job opportunities, social activity, etc.). These contributions, while well-intended, can seem disingenuous to disenfranchised groups whose experiences are not correlated with attending predominantly black institutions of higher learning.

"A lot of stuff concerning WOC is purely for optics and not meaningful."

Was your college degree necessary for your current line of work?

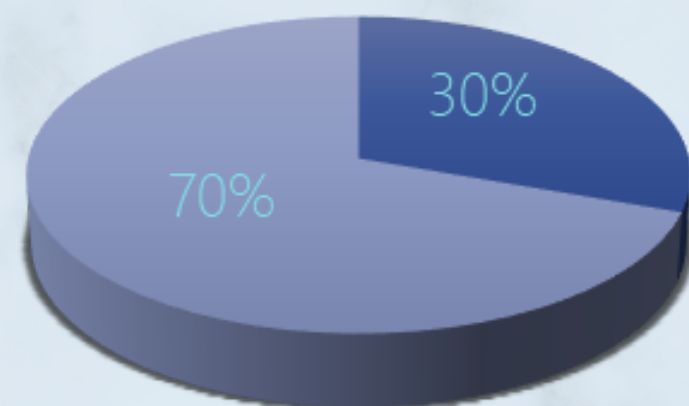
■ No
■ Not applicable / Prefer not to say
■ Yes



KEYNOTES:

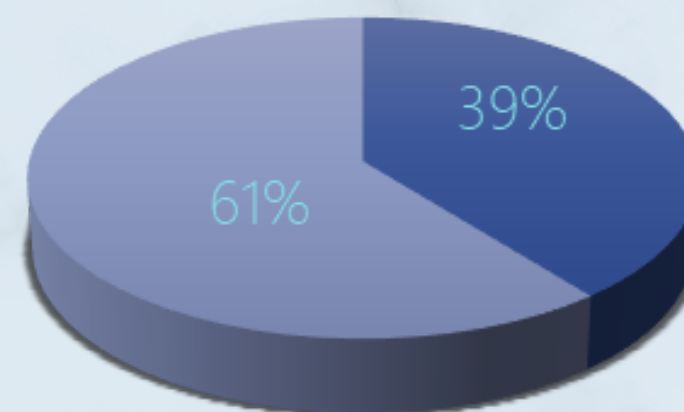
- 84% of WOC did not attend an HBCU
- 92% of WOC graduated with an Associate's Degree or higher
- 30% of WOC earning >\$100k graduated with a Bachelor's degree

Was your first gig in the music industry an internship?



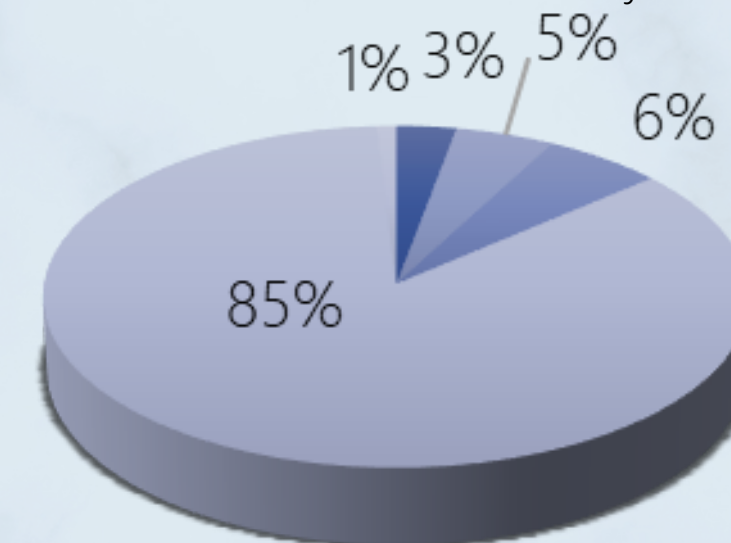
■ No ■ Yes

Your first gig in the music industry was..



■ Paid ■ Unpaid

Who hired you for your first paid role in the music industry?



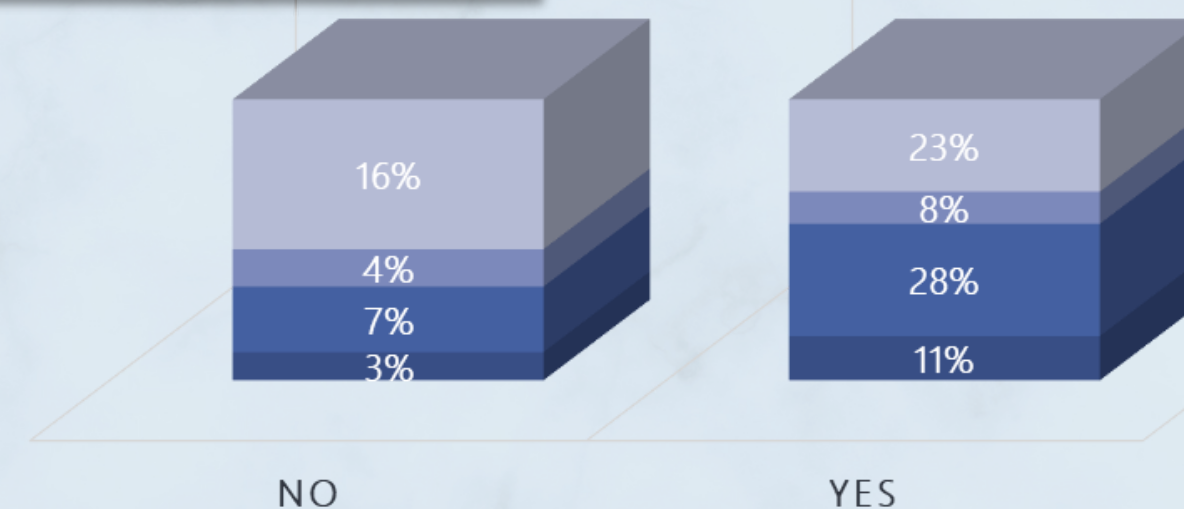
■ Family member
 ■ Friend
 ■ Mentor
 ■ Music Company Employer /or Supervisor
 ■ Artist

Internship

"...it starts in the beginning with paid internships. Most WOC cannot afford to work an unpaid internship even if it's an opportunity to get our foot in the door. That leads to less WOC in the industry as a whole."

GROSS EARNINGS X INTERNSHIP

■ > \$100k
 ■ < \$30k
 ■ \$50k - \$70k
 ■ \$30k - \$50k



Data shows that interning impacts your total earnings over time



WOMEN OF COLOR:

FINDING *Key Disparities*

MENTORSHIP

Career Development



46%

of WOC receive formal feedback
Annually or Hardly Ever

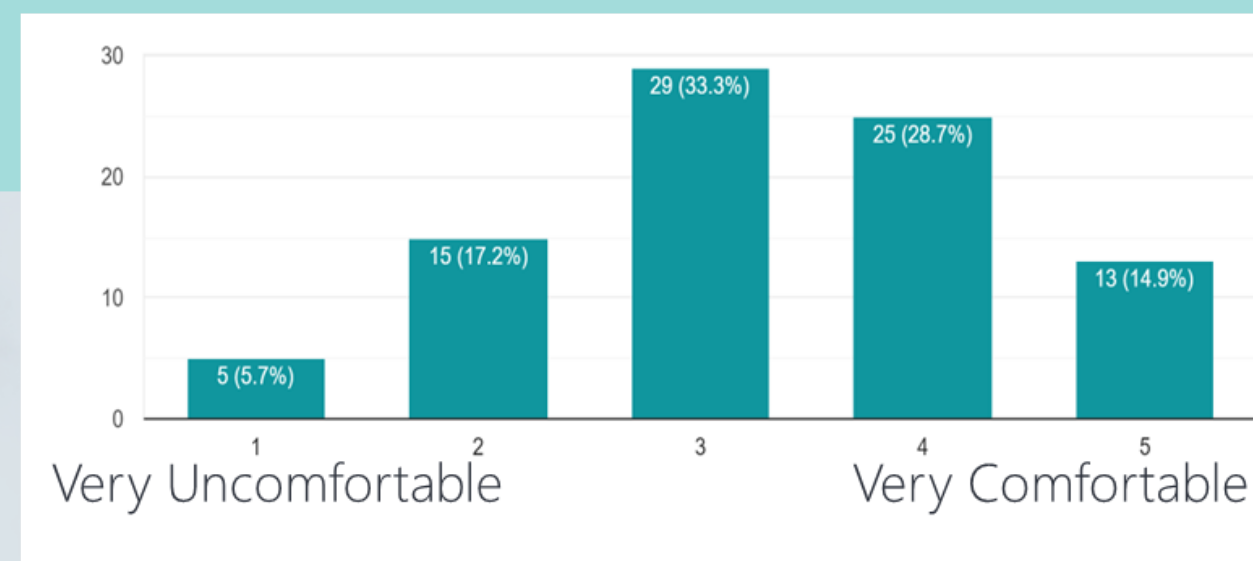
In your view, would you say that you
are fairly compensated?

The percentage of WOC who
DO NOT believe or are
UNSURE whether they are
fairly compensated

75%

The media plays a huge role in how society perceives groups of people. Subconscious biases are often developed by messages delivered through programming & technology. According to 45% of survey respondents, the music industry does not represent them positively and this contributes to not only misogynoir, but an office culture for which they must navigate through microaggressions, stigmatization, imposter's syndrome, the inability to advocate for oneself and show up authentically. Based on data collected by The Berkley Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship's 2018 study on Women in the US Music Industry, 21% of all women saw mentorship as the most positive influence, increasing their salaries by over \$40k over the span of their careers.

However, nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of all WOC survey respondents report receiving formal feedback on an annual basis and 16.5% hardly ever receive formal feedback at all. WOC in the music business report that promotions are more often based on experience / or contribution, however an unnerving 22.8% have never been promoted. While there is some encouragement for them to bring their ideas, thoughts, and/ or concerns to the boardroom, there is still an uncertainty of whether they are comfortable negotiating for a raise which implies that there is a level of insecurity in advocating for one's worth. A positive element reflected in the study shows that 28% of WOC are promoted via a change to or a new role & responsibility which may indicate that there is an observance and appreciation of additional talent that may not have been present before.



Overwhelmingly, WOC would prefer to be rewarded with a salary increase & promotion and are less concerned with additional training or perks like concert tickets. 28% of all respondents report that their compensation does not cover their living expenses and at least 44% have alternative sources of income to support themselves. 6% can unequivocally say that they are very financially stable, but the majority do not feel they are fairly compensated for their work especially as it relates to their white counterparts where wage disparities have long been a point of contention.



23%

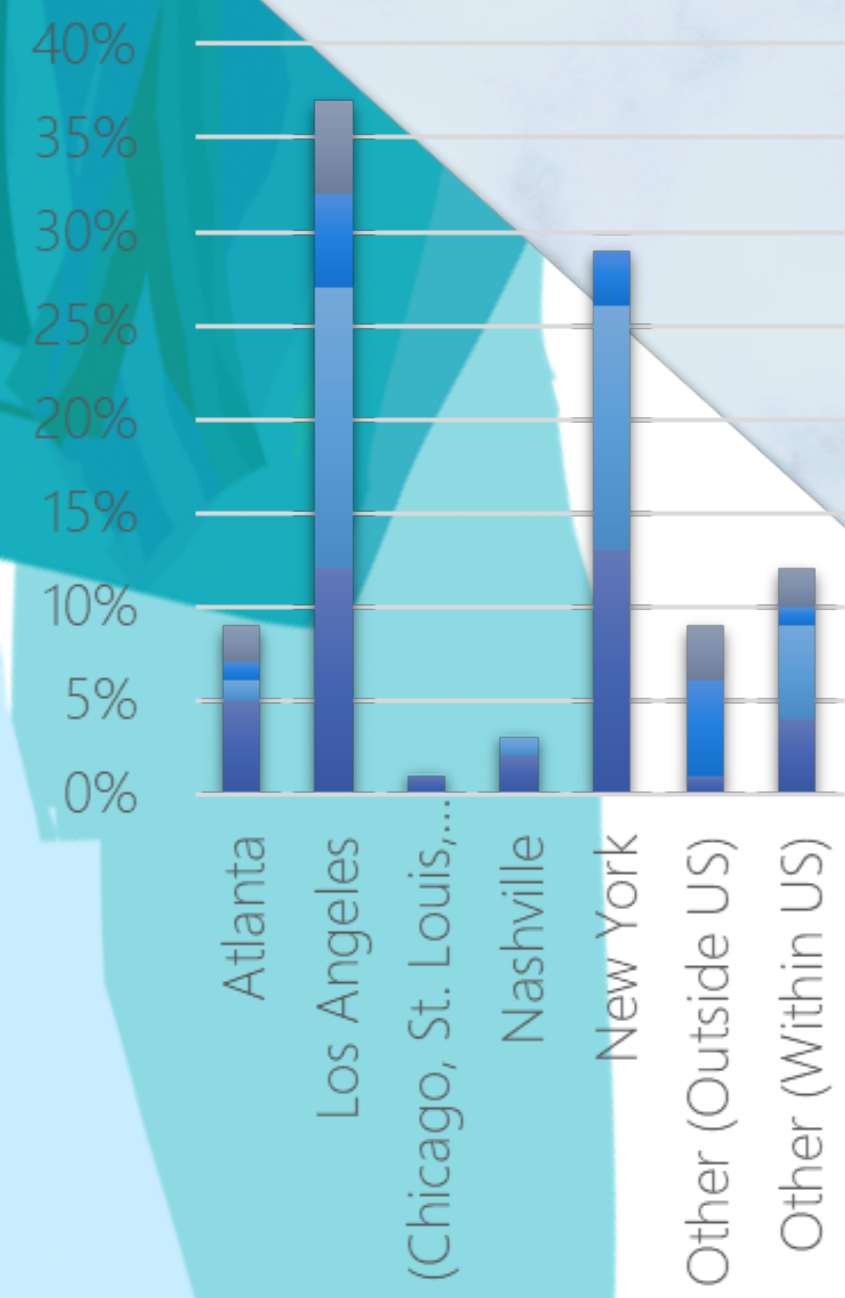
of WOC have
never been promoted



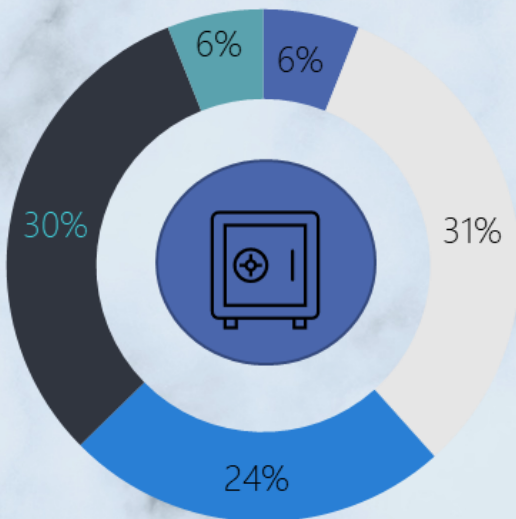
In what ways do you feel you could be
better rewarded in your current role?

In what ways do you feel you could be better rewarded in your current role?	Count
Salary increase	56
Promotion Opportunities	13
Better healthcare options	10
Bonuses	7
None of the above	5
Additional Training	5
Perks (ie. concert tickets, professional memberships, travel reimbursements, etc.)	2

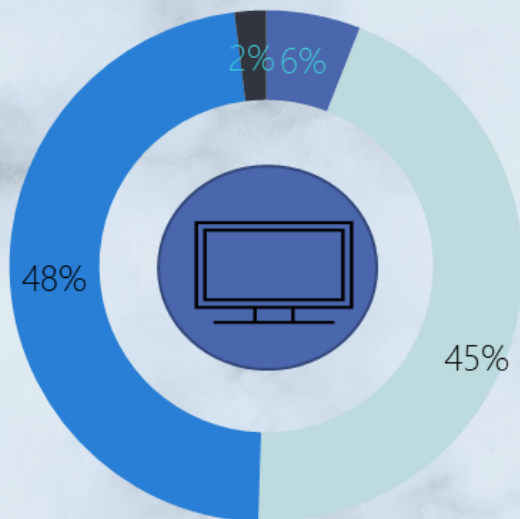
Gross Earnings x Territory



How do you feel about your current overall financial well-being?

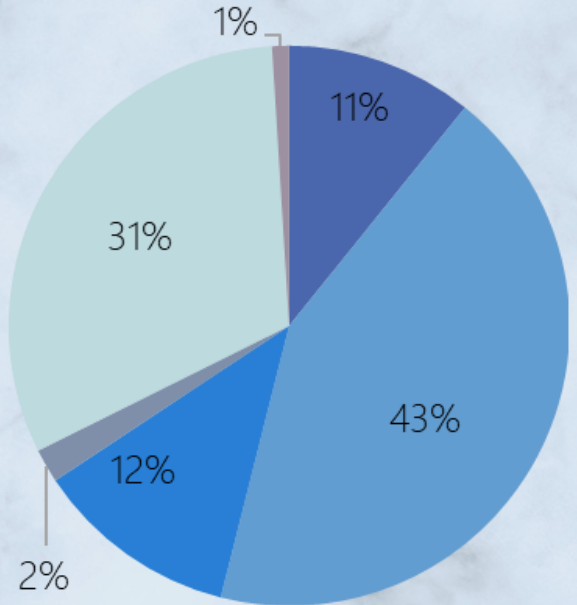


Does the music industry provide a positive representation of women of color?

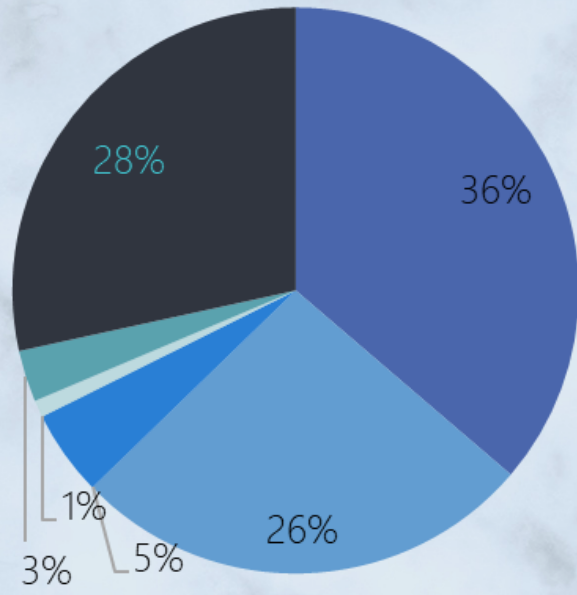


44% of WOC have alternative sources of income

How do you feel your compensation compares to that of your white female counterparts?



How do you feel your compensation compares to that of your white male counterparts?



Gross Earnings x Age



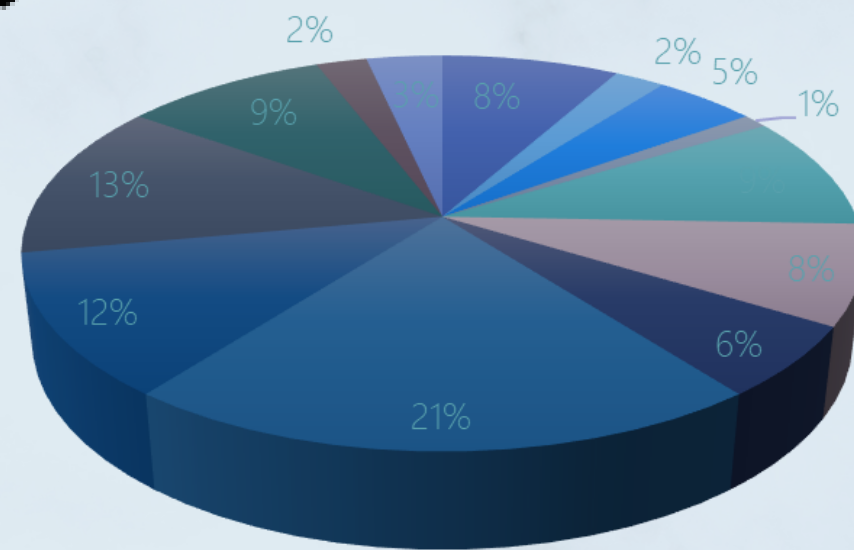
Confidence & Security



WOMEN OF COLOR: BALANCING THE SCALES

Culture Creators

Roles & Responsibilities



- A&R
- Creative Licensing
- Finance
- Management
- Music Executive
- Other
- Touring
- Artist / Musician / Songwriter / Producer
- Engineering
- Legal
- Marketing & Publicity
- Music Publishing
- Studio Management

As a woman of color, has out-earning your significant other ever negatively affected your relationship dynamic?

The percentage of WOC who say YES or AT TIMES

43%

Representation affects all aspects of business from the executive to creative level within the music industry. According to the 2021 USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative Report, while the top selling genres within the US are hip-hop/ R&B and 46.7% of all artists were people of color across 900 songs from 2012-2020, only 3.2% of top senior-most leadership roles are filled by women of color. There are reportedly 17.7 white male executives to every 1 Black female executive which means that the stories of the most consumed products in the music industry are not being driven by the people who actually experience these narratives.

There is a reckoning that needs to occur from top to bottom; a handling with care the voices of the consumed to be self-owned & administered so as to safeguard them from manipulation.

To protect authenticity (and to resonate with the masses) we should reflect on the election of controllers and change the language held within contracts which maintain subordination of people & property (i.e. the use of "master" and "slave").

In the US, black culture is a catalyst to every genre from country to rock music. Gatekeepers deny access to industry by withholding power & influence over these truths supported by historical data. Due to the lack of representation and information, women of color tend to occupy performative roles which lend themselves to soft-skilled / front-facing positions like Marketing & Publicity, Creative, A&R, and Management. However, technical / or operational (i.e. Finance, Legal, and Business Development) roles can provide an increased work/life balance and higher earnings potential over time.

This imbalance has a direct impact on the investment placed on family dynamics. Less than 45% of all WOC in the music industry are in romantic relationships. 54% report being the bread-winner of their relationships which ½ have said in some way, out-earning their significant other has negatively affected their relationship dynamic.

With the majority of respondents reporting that the responsibility of caretaking for children primarily falls on them, it is no surprise that more than 82% of WOC do not have children.

"We need more of us in C-Suite positions – that would be the game changer in several aspects."



45%

of WOC have a significant other

25% earn more than their spouses



82%

of WOC do not have children



Are responsibilities devised equally amongst the caretakers of your children?

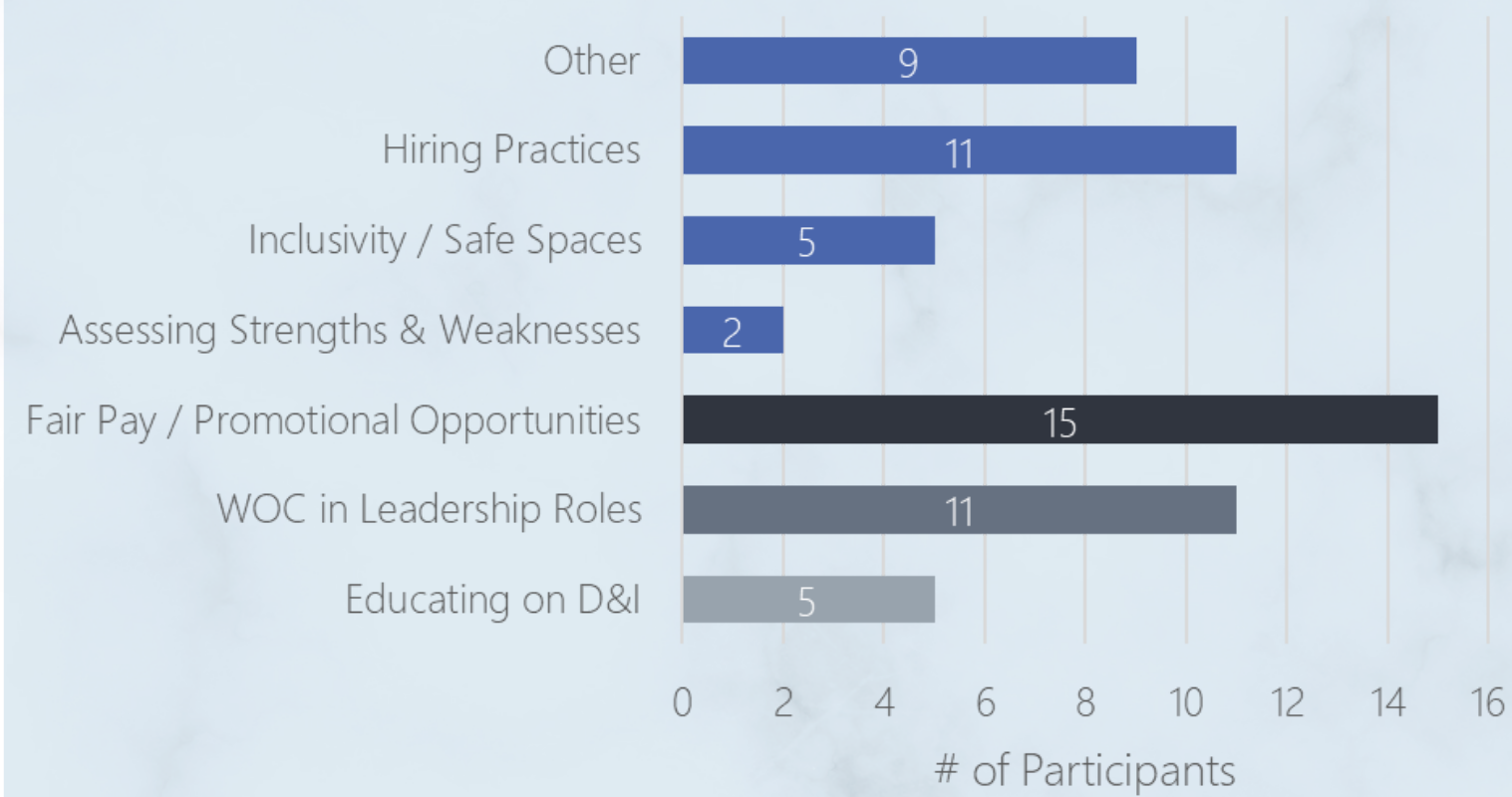
62%



WOMEN OF COLOR: TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY

Showing up for themselves

In your opinion, how can the music industry provide more inclusive work environments for women of color?



As women of color are not often found at senior executive levels in the music industry, advocacy is demonstrated on a grassroots level. Mentoring is the top way in which women of color support one another; sharing skills & experiences in an effort to instill others with knowledge and wisdom in what it takes to survive in a hyper-competitive industry. Often refuting the “crabs in a barrel” mentality, women of color find themselves cross-collaborating, joining in partnership with one another as there is an understanding that there are enough seats at the table for all and that ultimately helping each other rise to the occasion is the only way to see more diverse perspectives persevere.

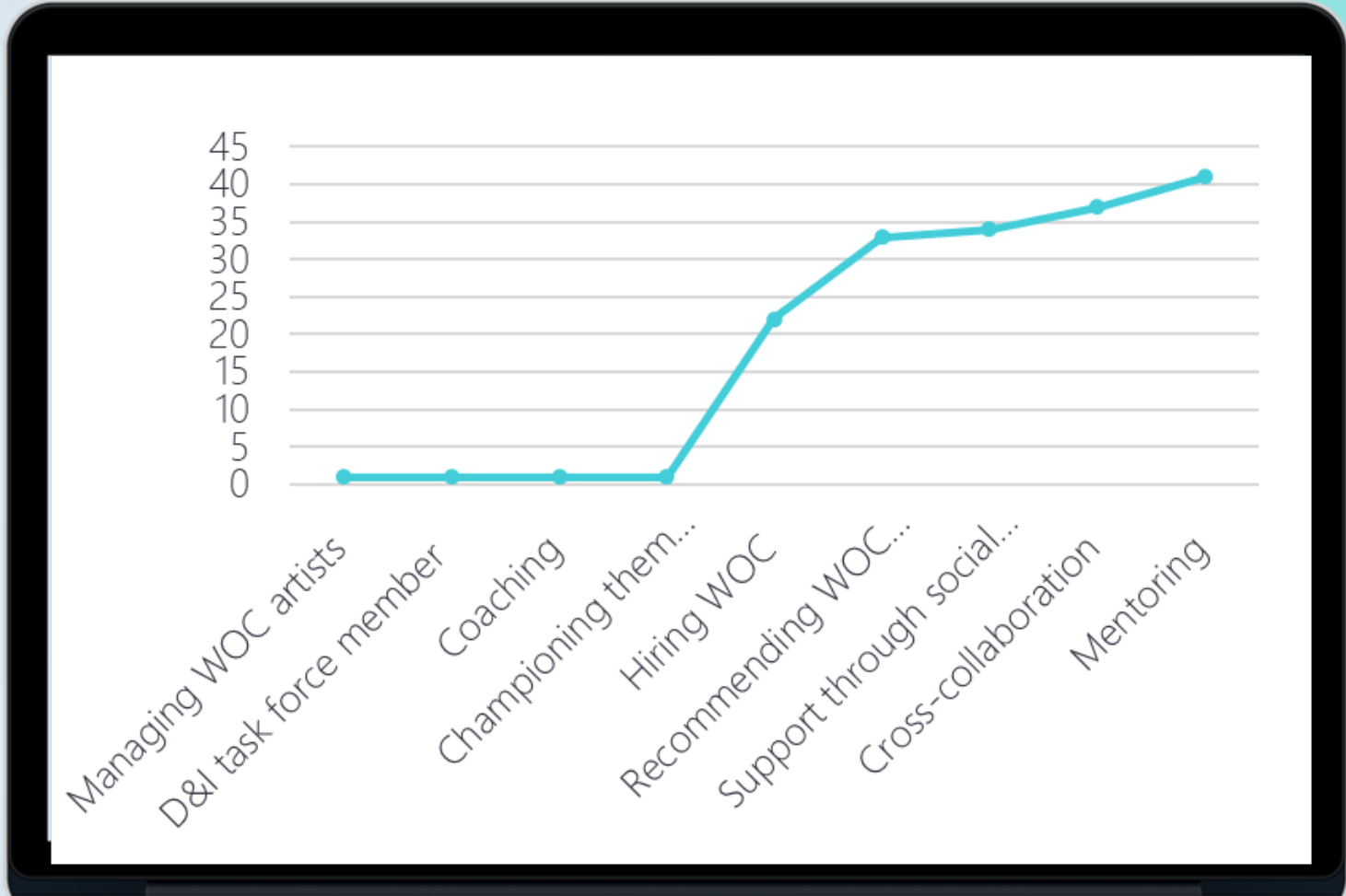
WOC in the music business feel the industry could do a better job at being intentional about hiring practices; be less concerned with meeting diversity quotas and more focused on inclusivity, allowing them to contribute in meaningful ways. Paying women of color fairly & offering promotional opportunities gives them an opportunity to advance and empower others to see themselves in more leadership positions. Moreover, providing more D&I programming so as to educate those that do not fall within underrepresented groups to have empathy & understanding towards the challenges that those at the intersection of gender & racial biases face; not as a way to demonize them, but as a way to create more collaborative work environments.

Finally, build a bridge between cultures by allowing women of color to take ownership of their work, lead projects & conversations so they see themselves outside of administration positions. There is a narrative that women of color, albeit skilled / qualified, are only assigned helpers or subordinate to male colleagues. By shifting this narrative, we allow the future of music to reflect more accurately the culture creators of the world.

“Train and trust women of color, pay women of color fairly, promote women of color.”

In which ways do you advocate for other women of color in the music industry?

Advocacy



The background features a white and grey marbled pattern. On the right side, there are several overlapping, abstract shapes in various shades of teal and light blue, resembling stylized leaves or petals.

WOMEN OF COLOR: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Allyship & Community

TAKEAWAYS

1. **Commit to paid internships**
2. **Build music programming initiatives in local institutions**
3. **Provide student-loan debt repayment assistance / payment matching opportunities akin to 401K investment matching**
4. **Provide benefits (i.e. commuter, lunch stipends, housing assistance) to offset the cost of living in major metropolitan cities**
5. **Commit to pay transparency at all levels & end wage discrimination**
6. **Plan more frequent / consistent meetings with WOC employees**
7. **Promote from within; seek talent from within organizations prior to bringing in new hires**
8. **Create safe spaces for women of color to express themselves freely without fear of retribution or retaliation**
9. **Be more intentional about having WOC in decision-making roles**
10. **Employ more women of color in leadership / decision-making positions**
11. **Create opportunities for work/life balance (i.e. Flexible scheduling, WFH / Hybrid roles)**
12. **Provide benefits for working parents (i.e. Childcare Stipends & Paid Parental Leave)**

Final Words

"So many WOC, particularly African American women, are still in mainly administrative support roles in the music industry when they are capable of doing so much more (or even more qualified than the role they are currently in). But I've seen white women shoot up from administrative support roles to senior management in ways that I've never seen with African American women. I also have noticed that WOC move from company to company much more often for advancement in their careers because they are not being considered as much for promotions at their current employer."

Appendix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to:

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for curating survey questions

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Black Music Action Coalition

Survey Distribution:
Recording Academy
Black Music Collective+
Women in Music
Amplify Her Voice
EMPIRE

A Seat at the Table: A Perspective on Women of Color in the Music Business is the 1st data analysis based on 100 survey respondents worldwide focused on intersectionality within the music industry.

One respondent identified as male; 6 identified as white were not asked to complete the survey reserved for women who identified as a person of color.

59% of respondents were between the ages of 26-35; 20% aged 36-45, 13% aged 16-25, and only 8% were 46 or older.

68% of respondents identified as Black; 9% identified as Multi-racial (non-white), 7% East Asian, 6% Bi-racial (white / non-white), 5% West Indian, 5% Latino-a/ of Hispanic Heritage, and 1% Middle Eastern.

Only 8% of respondents resided outside of the US. Of the 92% residing within the US, 37% live in Los Angeles; 28% live in New York; 8% live in Atlanta; 3% live in Nashville; less than 1% live in the Midwest region (Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit, etc.); 15% lived in another city within the US.

39% of survey respondents make more than \$100k/ year salary; 35% make between \$50-70k annually; 15% fall within the \$30-50k salary range; and 12% make less than \$30k/ annually.

20% of the respondents fulfilled Marketing & Publicity Roles; 12% in Publishing; 15% fulfill Executive roles; 12% A&R & Management roles; 7% Legal & Business Affairs; 4% in Touring; 5% in Creative Licensing; 3% in Artist / Musician / Producer roles; 1% in Engineering roles; and 11% in Other roles (Music Tech, Data, HR, etc.)

For real-time data analytics and reports:
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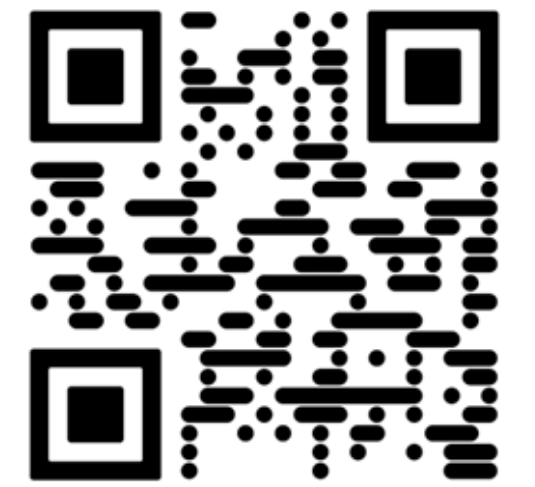


Podcast

THANK YOU!



Infographic



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