

MAKE/CHANGE
PLAYBOOK 2023:
PORTRAITS IN
CULTURE

文化における肖像画

At R/GA, we don't foster culture. We are culture! Culture is what we do. At R/GA culture isn't performative. It isn't a checkbox or a hoop to jump through. It's an authentic approach to ensuring that diverse lived experiences are at the core of our existence. From our work with clients to the day to day running of our agency, culture is in our DNA. We remain committed to our people and we strive to create an agency where our leaders represent the communities we serve. We will always center our core principles on diversity, equity and inclusion – creating an R/GA where everyone can belong. Make no mistake – we believe in progress over perfection and there is still so much to learn and do. We're moving forward in good faith, knowing that we will make mistakes along the way. Seeing our commitment become a reality is what drives us forward. Check out our 2023 playbook, "Portraits in Culture" from the Culture & Ops team (Talent). Hit us up with your stories, announcements and suggestions for future editions. We see you, R/GA!

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HUMAN

Ushering Wellness Into The New Year

On January 30, Asian Voices kicked off the Lunar New Year with a moment of reflection and celebration with Chinese BaZi astrologist, Tiff Lin [@tiffrexrei](#). This event was especially meaningful in light of the horrific acts of violence in Half Moon Bay, California two days prior.



A month later, BEN and the Black Leadership Coalition came together to observe a “Revolution of Rest” during this year’s Black History Month in February. Covered by [The Drum](#), BEN and the BLC led the charge with events planned throughout the entire year, rather than restricting activities to the month of February, given that countries around the world celebrate the histories and contributions of the Black diaspora at different points throughout the year. This approach was more fitting given R/GA’s global structure and outlook.

Events focused on a mental health and wellness theme. Julie Andrews (VP, Managing Director, Production) shared with The Drum, “... in honor of Black History Month, and the many, many Black people that blazed the trail of opportunity and access for us worldwide, we want to reframe Black history through a lens of rest – revolutionary rest. Rest that feeds us and celebrates our past. Rest that nourishes the collective Black culture of our present. And rest that speaks to where we are going as a more human, more diverse future at R/GA”.



One month later, BEN hosted part two of “Cozy Communion with Paige Rane” for a session called “Checking In and Easing Out” which highlighted different types of rest. The session encouraged attendees to commit to their rest journey and to share their progress in making space for rest on a daily basis.

WomanUP Prioritizes Wellness Through Ayurvedic Rituals

That same month, WomanUP presented “Rebalancing for Spring Through Ayurvedic Rituals” with [Ayurvedic Health Coach, Marissa Hutter](#). R/GAers joined from Europe, Argentina, Brazil and the U.S. The two part series centered around looking inward and embracing rituals to release pressure, restore balance and create space. A special shout out to Co-Chairs Elana Hutter Davey (Executive Producer, Ventures) and Anjelica Claxton (Senior Strategist) for planning an amazing session. For more Ayurvedic coaching, you can follow Marissa on Instagram at [@marissahutterayurveda](#).



Observing Ramadan With A Day Of Fasting

In celebration of Ramadan, Kareem hosted a virtual day of fasting. Co-Chairs Nafisa Hassan (Account Executive, Client Services) and Ameer Safadi (Account Coordinator, Client Services) shared that during this month-long observance, participating Muslims partake in fasting, prayer, and reflection. Ramadan is a holy month of fasting, introspection, and prayer for Muslims, the followers of Islam. Fasting is one of the five fundamental principles of Islam. Each day during Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink from dawn to sunset.

tips & tricks **7** RAMADAN Kareem

Ramadan is a time of reflection and celebration. It is a time where communities come together and individuals sacrifice their time and worldly goods in order to refocus on spirituality and to practice gratitude. Here are some tips to stay safe and make the most of your, optional, Ramadan fasting experience!

1 Set your intention for the day

Find purpose in why you are doing this in order to stay motivated towards a successful day.

We encourage writing down your intention in order to have the physical copy, but you can keep a mental note if you wish.

Each individual may have a different purpose as to why they are committing to this, and each reason is valid.

2 Don't skip out on Suhoor!

Suhoor is the meal consumed early in the AM before the day of fasting begins, which means some people skip it to savor their sleep— DON'T DO THAT!

You will be fasting from before sunrise to sunset— a whole day without food or water, so use the final moments to fill up on nutrients!

3 Fasting is not only about the food

Ramadan is also about reflection, community, and compassion.

Use this time to share your time, resources, and kindness with others.

4 Stay hydrated the day before

Refrain from salty foods the day before you fast since they make you thirsty, and keep a water bottle near you the day prior to remain hydrated.

5 Inform your peers beforehand

Ramadan celebrations are plenty, but we do not halt all of our tasks and responsibilities.

Plan accommodations with your managers and coworkers so that you can enjoy your fast and also do some work.

6 When hunger strikes— how to internalize it.

It is normal to get hungry during the day while fasting— that is partially how we grow empathy for the less fortunate.

If it is safe for you to do so, you can divert your hunger in different ways: resting to refresh, distracting yourself by learning a new skill, stretch, etc.

7 Be thoughtful of where you put your energy

Cut where you can, and add to where it is beneficial. Focus on what you can make possible, and how you can grow spiritually and physically with the energy that you have.

Avoid tasks that will tire you quickly, Plan on times of rest, and times of action to have a wholesome day.

Muslims break their daily fasts by sharing meals with family and friends, and the end of Ramadan is celebrated with a three-day festival known as Eid al-Fitr, one of Islam’s major holidays. Ramadan always falls on the ninth month of the 12-month Islamic calendar. Ramadan 2023 tentatively (dependent on lunar calendar) began at sunset on Wednesday, March 22, and ended on the evening of Friday, April 21.

“These acts remind us of the less fortunate and reinforce the need to be thankful”, they shared. The Co-Chairs encouraged those fasting to do so as an opportunity to explore the practice of fasting with allies at R/GA. They explained, “As we fast, we’re building empathy for those who are less fortunate. It also gives an opportunity to channel that hunger in different ways for self-reflection and discipline”.



WomanUp's Comedy Night In BK

Woman/Up hosted seven Spring Meet Ups across the US and Buenos Aires including a Comedy night at Cafe Balearica in Williamsburg and I was so pleased to tag along with the crew. The comics were both inappropriate and hilarious, as all comics should be! A good time was had by all!



Mental Health In AAPI Communities With Harvard University's Dr. Josephine Kim

Asian Voices welcomed Dr. Josephine Kim to deliver a talk on mental health and AAPI communities. Dr. Kim did not disappoint and shed light on so many issues impacting AAPI talent in the workplace. She spoke about the experiences of Asian talent who are often raised in collectivist cultures that focus on the community or group, versus American culture which focuses on the individual. The talk ended with an eye opening, vulnerable and touching panel discussion hosted by Alex Manfredi, a Junior Strategist. The panel discussion featured: Kylie Squiers (Associate Producer) and Chassey Reyes (Strategy Director).



R/GA'S

ASIAN VOICES PRESENTS

23.05
2023

12-1
PM EST

A TALK WITH HARVARD UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR DR. JOSEPHINE KIM: "PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY FOR ASIAN VOICES IN THE WORKPLACE"

As the world continues to battle uncertainty, violence, and racism, there is an urgent need to protect our mental health. A key way to promote mental health in the workplace is to create a culture that fosters psychological safety, because employees who feel psychologically

safe at work are not only productive but they thrive and soar. What then helps to promote psychological safety, especially for employees of Asian heritage at the workplace, and what threatens their psychological safety? Let's take an intentional pause for mental health together.

LGBTQ+ Network: Trans Activist Munro Bergdorf Celebrates Queer Joy!



In June, Lexi and I met with LGBTQ+ Co-Chairs Jen Folks (Associate Director, Talent Acquisition), Jade Lutale (Junior Strategist) and Julian Soto (Associate Creative Director, Copywriting) to plan for Pride 2023. What we noticed was the sheer excitement and enthusiasm shared by each Chair for this year's observance. Speaking of this year's theme, Julian Soto told us that Queer Joy is "...a celebration of the diverse expressions of joy in the LGBTQ+ community and the myriad ways it lights up our lives. In a climate where anti-LGBTQ+ hate is getting louder and louder in the discourse, this is a call to drown out the hate with joy and love".

Our LGBTQ+ Culture Collective hosted a Fireside Chat with Munroe Bergdorf, an internationally renowned activist, model, writer, broadcaster and the first transgender model for the brand L'Oreal. Munroe shared their experiences in a riveting and honest conversation about finding happiness amidst anti-LGBTQ+ hate. You can follow Munroe on Instagram at [@munroebergdorf](https://www.instagram.com/munroebergdorf).

The event was moderated by Jesse Safan, (Strategy Director) and attended by not only internal R/GAers, but by several IPG agencies including Axcion, Jack Morton, UM Worldwide, FCB and IPG. I could have listened to Munroe speak all day! They minced no words and spoke truth to power in a way that was both candid and refreshing, inspiring all those in attendance. After Munroe's talk, our esteemed panel of R/GA talent included Jade Lutale (Junior Strategist, Strategy), Justin Dinnanauth, (Talent Partner, Talent) and Julie Andrews (former VP, Managing Director, Production).

Global DEI Goal Setting Meetings

The Culture & Operations team hosted Make/Change planning sessions with global leaders. These sessions focused on our agency-wide DEI goals for 2023 for the US, EMEA, LATAM and APAC regions to ensure we are keeping our commitment to creating a more equitable future. We also administered the BELONG survey to gauge employee views and experiences about culture at R/GA.



R/GA'S Jewish Community Comes Together

Shanah Tovah 5784
שנה טובה ה'תשפ"ד

To our R/GA Jewish Community,
Wishing you and your loved ones
a happy, healthy, sweet New Year!

שנה טובה



In an effort to nurture a sense of belonging and inclusion for our Jewish community at R/GA, we've created a dedicated space to celebrate Jewish culture and connect on shared experiences. This past September, R/GA's Jewish community helped usher in the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) with gift packages of specially designed greeting cards by Edan Michener (Sr. Visual Designer) and the traditional holiday food, honey cake. From December 7-15 we observed Hanukkah (Festival of Lights) commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and rededication of the Second Temple during the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire (2nd century BCE). Look out for some sweet holiday treats, cheer, and lights in the New York office.



If you'd like to get to know the Jewish community or get involved in future activities, please reach out to Elana Hutter Davey (elana.hutterdavey@rga.com) or Chaya (chaya.leverton@rga.com) directly.

A big thanks to @Sarah Vega and @Linh Duong for their continued support in these efforts.



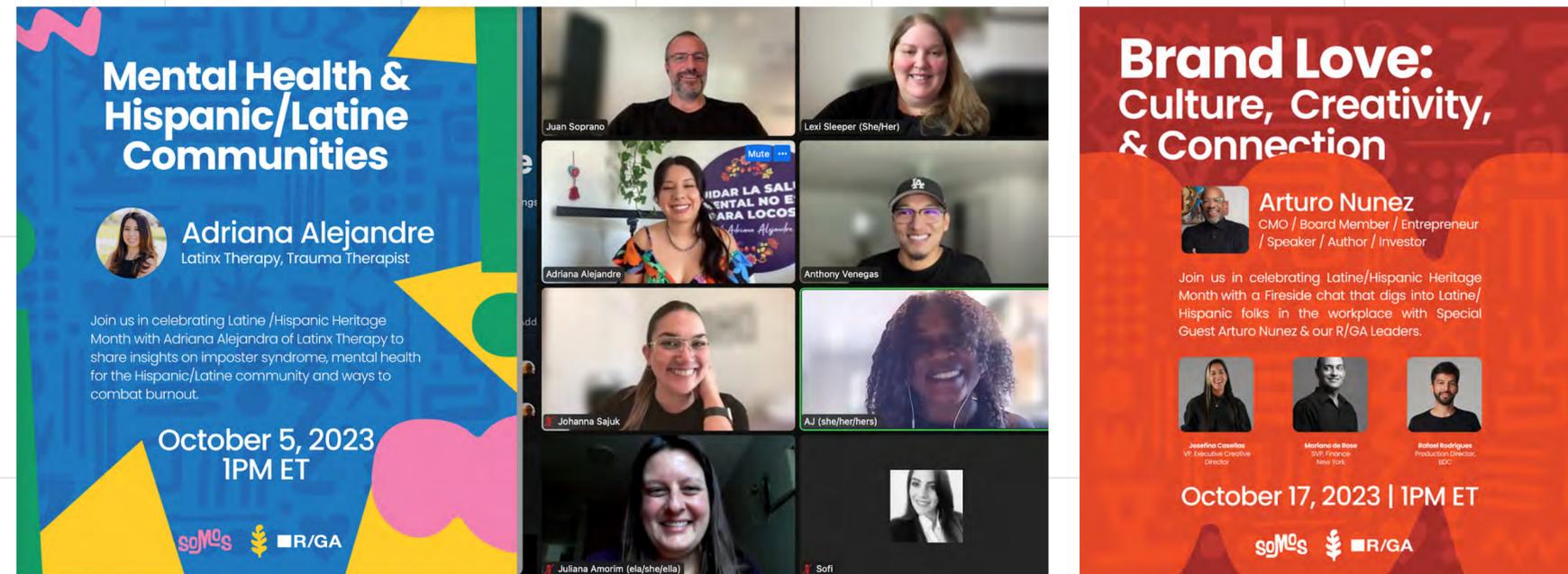
SOMOS: R/GA Celebra El Mes De La Herencia Latina



From SOMOS Chairs, Anthony Venegas (Associate Producer, Production) and Johanna Sajuk (Integration Experience Manager, Talent), September was a busy month of programming. SOMOS ushered in Latine-Hispanic Heritage Month and hosted several events including a keynote speaker, a Fireside Chat and happy hours hosted simultaneously in Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires and NYC.

This year, Juan Soprano (VP, Managing Director for Spanish Speaking LATAM) and Imran Sheikh (Group Executive Creative Director, Experience Design) were SOMOs Ambassadors. We wanted to give them a shout out for their support. Do you want to get involved? Thinking of becoming a co-chair or leading a subcommittee? Hit up Anthony (anthony.venegas@rga.com) or Johanna (johanna.sajuk@rga.com).

SOMOS: R/GA Celebra El Mes De La Herencia Latina



On October 5, SOMOS hosted Adriana Alejandre, a Psychotherapist, Consultant and a nationally recognized advocate for mental health. Adriana holds a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University and is the founder of Latinx Therapy, a bilingual group practice that specializes in EMDR and Trauma Therapy with a nationally recognized directory of Latinx Therapists. You can follow Latinx Therapy on Instagram at [@LatinXTherapy](https://www.instagram.com/LatinXTherapy).

As a follow up to Adriana's amazing talk, SOMOS featured distinguished speaker and brand expert Arturo Nunez in a Fireside Chat on October 17. Arturo shared career journeys, the impact of his Latine/Hispanic identity and other topics such as fostering inclusive workspaces in spaces that weren't designed for Latine talent. He was a candid and engaging speaker and we will be sure to keep an eye out for his new business venture in NYC, along with his new book. SOMOS' Latine-Hispanic heritage month activities were given a shout out by The Drum. If you haven't read the [article](#) check it out below.

Black Employee Network Hosts Popcorn Finance

R/GA's Black Employee Network (BEN) hosted a discussion with Chris Browning, the host of the podcast [Popcorn Finance](#), to speak with BEN members on how to level-up our financial literacy. For more financial tips, follow Chris on Instagram at [@PopcornFianance](#). When asked about what it means for R/GA to reflect diversity, Jess Couloute, Chair of BEN and a Copywriter shared, "Representation is about more than just a 'presence'. It's about impact. BEN is also led by Committee Leads Inez Whitt (Community Manager, Strategy) and Malik Hoddge (Associate Media Strategist, Media) who shared that the goal of the Black Employee Network (BEN) is to be more than just a symbol of diversity within R/GA. "We want to serve as an oasis for Black talent to draw from, so that once they get their foot in the door – they feel supported and well equipped when they are standing in the room". Want to learn more about BEN or to get involved, email Jess at jess.couloute@rga.com.



↙ A ■ BEN EVENT

FROM SAVER TO INVESTOR

09.26 at 1PM EST | Virtual Event

Join the host of Popcorn Finance, Chris Browning, in an approachable discussion to level-up our understanding around "saving" versus "investing." In this conversation we'll cover the diverse ways in which you can design a sustainable plan unique to your financial goals.

Whether you are just beginning your financial journey, preparing to take the next step in reaching your financial aspirations – or just want to stop by and see what's good. You'll be sure to leave this conversation with a few kernels of financial sense. So come see what's poppin'!

Make/Change 2023 Report



ADCOLOR 2023: Double Down & Double Up!

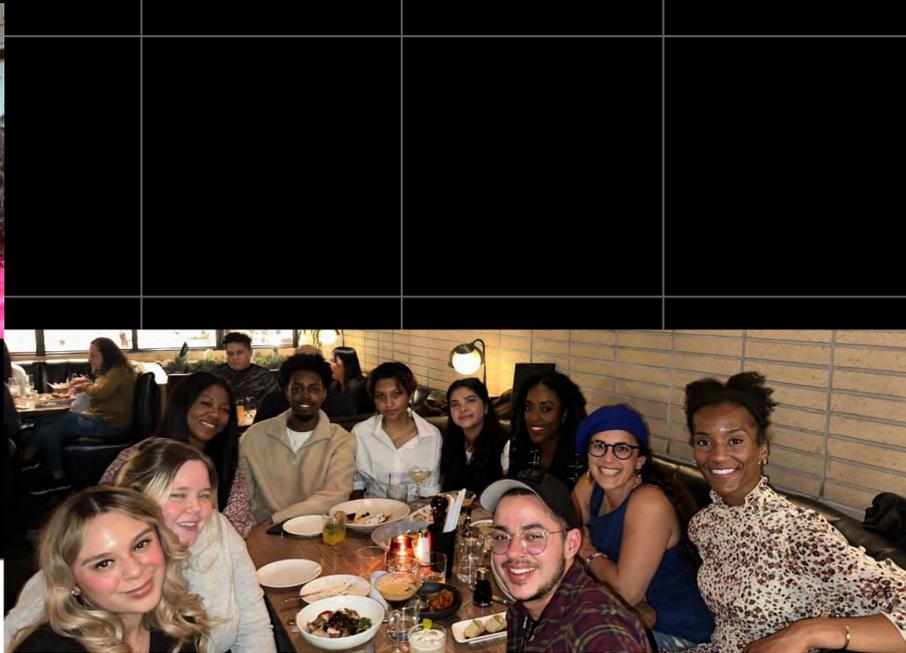
ADCOLOR is the industry’s pre-eminent conferences that brings together BIPOC and other underrepresented talent into one space for several days each year. The conference champions diversity in creative industries and aims to create a community of diverse professionals who support and celebrate each other. This year, Talent sponsored nine of us to attend the three day event. A highlight for our team was the fact that Nafisa Hassan was an ADCOLOR Future. We’re so proud of you Nafisa!

ADCOLOR Future: R/GA’s Nafisa Hassan



Nafisa Hassan was an ADCOLOR Future at this year’s conference and a big Congratulations is in store for the fact that Nafisa represented our agency so well.





This year's ADCOLOR Cohort included: Anjelica Claxton (WomanUP), Jess Couloute (BEN), Nafisa Hassan (FUTURE, Kareem), Malik Hodge (BEN), Elana Hutter Davey (WomanUP), Jade Lutale (LGBTQ+), Julian Soto, LGBTQ+ and Dr. Anita Jack-Davies, Culture & Ops (Global DEI Lead). A special shout out to Angie Hannam (EVP & Global Chief Talent Officer) and our CEO Robin Forbes for sending such a large cohort to this year's conference.

Our cohort spent three days in LA and attended a slew of sessions covering topics from wellness and mental health to accessibility and accommodations in the workplace. There were several takeaways and recommendations for R/GA's leadership team to consider:

2023 Conference Takeaways

- 01** Sponsoring talent attendance to conferences such as ADCOLOR is one key way to show leadership's commitment to and investment in DEI.
- 02** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion must sit at the heart of all of the work that we do. It needs to be intentional, consistent, and upheld by everyone in the organization.
- 03** Accessibility is an important topic that creates a space for belonging both inside R/GA and in our work.



2024 Recommendations

- 01** Prioritize the promotion of R/GAers and campaign for awards. Actively promote junior R/GAers for ADCOLOR Futures and strengthen our involvement with ADCOLOR Futures.
- 02** Increase the representation of Global and US Leaders at the conference, ensuring their attendance at the awards show, and sustain the level of engagement achieved in 2018.
- 03** Become a part of the ADCOLOR Board, enabling R/GA team members to apply for speaking opportunities at the conference and explore the possibility of sponsoring the event.

SPEAK (W)UP! An Annual Thought Leadership Event Hosted By R/GA's WomanUP

On November 2nd, WomanUP hosted its first annual conference that showcases thought leadership from newer voices. This year, SPEAK (w)UP centered around the 2023 theme, "Belonging". Six women R/GA'ers shared how they see belonging playing out in world culture and about their own experiences of finding belonging. Co-Chairs Elana Hutter Davey and Anjelica Claxton put together this amazing moment of reflection and discovery and we thank them for their vision!



Make/Change 2023 Report

Kareem Hosts Chai Chat With Mili Semlani



Kareem hosted Chai Chat with Mili Semlani on November 14. While Chai tea is known and loved as an iconic Indian beverage, explained Semlani, a new media professional whose work revolves around the themes of content, communication and community, did you know that tea, aka chai, was not native to India? Colonizers brought it with them as an act of rebellion. Semlani explained that making Chai is a mental health routine she was eager to share with our audience at R/GA and she did not disappoint. The session was intimate, interactive and soothing to the soul. You can follow Mili on Instagram at [@theuntraveller](https://www.instagram.com/theuntraveller). Check out the Chai tea that our very own Lexi Sleeper (Senior DEI Manager, Culture & Operations, Talent) made. We see you Lexi!

SPOTLIGHT

In this section, we're featuring three R/GAers who contribute to building an inclusive culture at our agency: Alex Manfredi (Junior Strategist), Nafisa Hassan (Account Executive) and Inez Whitt (Community Manager, Strategy). Each has contributed greatly to our Culture Collectives and wanted to give them a shout out in what we call, Tale of the Tape!

Alex Manfredi

Alex Manfredi is a Strategist who works on Nike. He focuses on creative technology and is a MAIP Alum and Coach.



Question

What attracted you to R/GA and what will keep you here?

Answer

R/GA relentlessly uses technology in service of humanity instead of tech for tech's sake. I think that is so powerful when it comes to finding ways to deepen relationships and connect with our communities.

Question

When you think about inclusion at R/GA what comes to mind?

Answer

Co-workers that look like me, leadership that cares and puts money behind our actions, and Culture Collectives that are the heartbeat of R/GA's diversity.

Beyonce or Rihanna?

Beyonce (bee hive babyyyyyy!)

Coke or Pepsi?

Coke

Beach or Adventurous Holiday?

Beach, love me some ocean time and vegetating

Ice cream or Sorbet?

Macha ice cream hits different

New York or LA?

NYC all day I like walking (and running)



Nafisa Hassan

Nafisa is a MAIP intern turned AAE and now AE. She explains, “R/GA has been the foundation of my career trajectory!”



Question

What attracted you to R/GA and what will keep you here?

Answer

R/GA’s human future focus and prioritization of brand connection via a strategic approach. What’ll keep me here is continuing to work with individuals who not only challenge the work to its greatest potential, but also those who continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Question

When you think about inclusion at R/GA what comes to mind?

Answer

Culture collectives, supportive managers, and culturally competent approach to briefs.

Beyonce or Rihanna?

¿Por qué no los dos?

Coke or Pepsi?

Coke

Beach or Adventurous Holiday?

Adventure all the way! Just recently hiked up a mountain in Costa Rica

Ice cream or Sorbet?

Ice cream is the only correct answer here.

New York or LA?

I’ve never been to L.A, ask me after I visit in November as an AdColor Future!



Inez Whitt

Inez Whitt is a veteran in the social media space. With 5+ years experience, Inez joined R/GA last year as a community manager on the Verizon team, contributing to campaigns such as the iPhone 2022 & 2023 release, Super Bowl, + play, Google Pixel and more.



Question

What attracted you to R/GA and what will keep you here?

Answer

What attracted me to R/GA was the opportunity to expand on my social media expertise and the opportunity to be a part of the culture collective (BEN). I knew R/GA was a bigger agency, so I was ready for a different experience that would challenge me!

Question

What will keep you here?

Answer

What will keep me here is the ability to jump on different projects with different clients, and eventually pivoting into Experience Strategy (which I am passionate about).

Question

When you think about inclusion at R/GA what comes to mind?

Answer

When I think of inclusion here, I think of our Culture Collectives. This is my first time in my professional experience seeing diversity and inclusion being truly represented. We are small, but mighty!

Beyonce or Rihanna?

Beyonce

Coke or Pepsi?

Coke

Beach or Adventurous Holiday?

Adventure

Ice cream or Sorbet?

Sorbet

New York or LA?

NY (pending because I'll be visiting LA soon haha)



Planning an interesting DEI project?
We would love to hear from you.
Submit your DEI initiatives for
inclusion in future reports. Cheers!



Dr. Anita Jack-Davies

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A special shout out to
Heidi Kim for her design on
this report and so many of
other projects in 2023!