

A J&J DAVID CASE STUDY POWERED BY



Solidarity by Design with Lush Cosmetics

Sustaining Employee Engagement with Reparative Justice Advocacy

BACKGROUND

The "Solidarity with Lush" engagement represents a groundbreaking collaboration between the Decolonizing Wealth Project (DWP) and Lush Cosmetics (Lush) to advance reparative justice through narrative change. The Justice for Greenwood (JFG) campaign appeared in all U.S. shops (205) and online from May 31-June 9, 2024. Lush met the Justice For Greenwood Foundation at DWP's 2023 Alight, Align, Arise National Conference on Repair (A3), where they were also introduced to DWP and JJD's repair research, subsequently delivered as Solidarity by Design. DWP's A3 conference and Solidarity by Design research catalyzed conversations that led to Lush's pivotal display of corporate reparations advocacy.

The JFG campaign ran during the most divisive presidential election season in modern times. Views on race, the legacy of slavery and white societal advantages produced deeper divisions amongst Americans than any other cultural issue outside of gun ownership.¹ Yet, as a champion for human rights and pioneer in corporate impact, Lush used its platform to build much needed support for this complex social justice issue.

The JFG campaign in shops featured educational materials designed to bridge historical awareness of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre with contemporary action. In addition to purchasing a limited-edition, fundraising soap called [Brighter Day](#), customers were engaged to record their support for reparations for the descendants and survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre. In addition, with support from Justice for

¹ June 6, 2024. [Cultural Issues, Biden, and Trump Voters and the 2024 Election. Pew Research Center.](#)

Greenwood and other allies, the Lush team created a documentary titled "[Greenwood Is Still Burning](#)". In order to mobilize support for reparations through product sales, postcard messages, and in-store advocacy, JFG prioritized staff wellness, skill-building, and team cohesion through innovative training architectures and cultural competency frameworks.

KEY RESULTS

- **Substantive Reparative Impact:** There was close to 75% positive reception of postcards with 6,000 Lush customers taking action to complete postcards, exceeding completion rate expectations across US cities.
 - The campaign in the United States and Canada generated \$145,000 for reparations funds despite a compressed timeline, product critiques, and 3-5 required customer touchpoints.
 - 21% ROI and 10% annualized ROI over 2 years for DWP's investment in [Solidarity by Design](#) research.²
- **Leaps in Professional Development:** Stores implementing standardized training saw 23% higher customer engagement and 56% of staff utilized training materials for personal anti-racism education.
 - 89% of staff expanded advocacy communication skills
 - 72% reported improved conflict resolution abilities applicable beyond campaigns
- **Leadership Pipeline Growth:** Over the course of the two-week campaign, the use of peer-led workshops increased 19%.
 - 22 emerging leaders identified through campaign facilitation
 - 14% of participants pursued Lush's internal management training programs post-campaign
- **Greater Corporate Cultural Cohesion:** Stores implementing standardized training saw 63% of managers report improved conflict navigation among staff.
 - 41% increase in team trust scores
 - 27% reduction in staff turnover during the campaign

² ROI and Annualized ROI were calculated based on the total amount raised by the JFG campaign taking into account DWP's total investment in Solidarity by Design narrative research over two years.

KEY CHALLENGES OVERCOME

- **Bridging Staff–Customer Engagement Gaps:** Despite positive staff sentiment, discussing reparations is a complex issue with deep public resentment. Staff had to overcome customer apathy, as well as regional challenges that created considerable emotional labor demands.
- **Product Sales:** The limited-edition Brighter Day Soap—from which 100% of the purchase price (minus the taxes) was granted out to grassroots organizations working to heal histories of harm across North America —was released in the backdrop of multiple product releases at a similar time. On the heels of Lush’s ‘World Bath Bomb Day’, customers were not looking to purchase soap, in particular. Issues with formula and batch production also caused Lush to fall 50% short of its fundraising goal.
- **Competing Priorities:** Lush is a global brand, often with multiple marketing and advocacy campaigns running concurrently. JFG was a standout campaign requiring immense leadership and teamwork to balance the fun, light-hearted and lavish appeal of Lush products with the gravitas of reparations.

ENGINEERED DATA-DRIVEN ADVOCACY SOLUTION

- **Data-Driven Narrative Strategy and Relational Audience Segmentation:** [Solidarity by Design](#) drove the JFG narrative strategy. JJD and DWP presented exclusive research findings to Lush prior to its public release. Lush integrated insights into the narrative strategy and training architecture for the JFG campaign. Lush further bifurcated messaging with the following strategies to allow staff to act as informed advocates rather than scripted salespeople:
 - Staff: Emphasized systemic repair through reparations literacy
 - Customer: Centered survivor stories and actionable steps (e.g., postcard)
- **Employee-Centric Training:** Lush developed a layered curriculum combining podcasts, video testimonials, and QR-accessible legal briefs, achieving an 8/10 preparedness score across 190 surveyed staff. Lush implemented:
 - Trauma-informed training: Archival footage analysis of Greenwood survivors and descendants paired with guided reflection exercises

- Role-play simulations: Scenario-based practice to prepare staff to handle objections and manage denialist rhetoric and "whataboutism"
- Collaborative Learning Ecosystems: Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing cross-store mentorship pairing between conservative and progressive markets and gamified education with podcasts converted into team trivia challenges

This approach increased interdepartmental collaboration by 34% and leadership skill self-ratings by 28% among junior staff.

- **Wellness Infrastructure:** Lush provided on-demand mental health resources in the form of 24/7 access to counseling services and peer support networks. As a result, staff wellness metrics improved significantly:
 - 78% reported using provided self-care tools regularly
 - 65% felt "better equipped" to manage difficult conversations post-campaign

CONCLUSION

As a result, the Justice for Greenwood campaign **raised \$85,000 for reparations organizations in the United States** – simultaneously achieving an **89% staff skill development rate** and **34% improvement in team cohesion scores** for Lush. When analyzed in isolation from other reparations activities influenced by DWP and the Solidarity By Design report, the JFG campaign success translates to a **21 % ROI** for DWP on their original investment in J&J David research.

Lush's Justice for Greenwood campaign, fueled by Decolonizing Wealth Project and J&J David research and strategic guidance, proved that tackling seemingly difficult advocacy campaigns can serve as vehicles for workforce empowerment and social impact. With an infrastructure for reparations education on a global scale, Lush centered survivor voices, invested in staff wellness, and charted a path for brands to engage historical justice as commitments.

ABOUT SOLIDARITY BY DESIGN

DWP partnered with JJD to execute a multi-year, multi-method narrative research project, [Solidarity by Design](#). This study classified the American public based on their lived experiences around race, designed healing community-based narratives dedicated to repair, and tested the power of data-driven stories of healing and repairing to inspire everyday Americans to support Black reparatory justice. In addition to the impact described above, DWP's commitment to being a resource distributor produced the following outcomes.

- **Movement-Wide Narrative Saturation:** The insights from [Solidarity by Design](#) catalyzed data-driven narrative strategy and communication.
 - 300+ organizations report downloads
 - 150+ trainings
 - 2 investor briefings

ABOUT

Decolonizing Wealth Project (DWP), is committed to bringing truth, healing and repair to the global community. Established in 2018, and led by Edgar Villanueva, an award-winning author, and expert on wealth, spirituality, and social justice, DWP operates through three key strategies: sector transformation, storytelling and culture, and reparative giving. DWP's work has radically transformed the philanthropic sector and has facilitated the distribution of over \$700 million for social justice efforts. Liberated Capital, DWP's fund and donor community has granted over \$21 million to support economic solidarity, wellbeing, and earth and climate efforts primarily led by Black and Indigenous communities.

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