

NYC TOR VAN



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

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2024 PROGRESS REPORT

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT ZULU ALPHA KILO

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## INTRODUCTION

We are proud to present our fifth annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Progress Report.

Building on the progress of previous years, 2024 has been a year of strategic refinement and action as we continue to prioritize creating a workplace that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. This report highlights our achievements, provides insights into our approach, and lays out our roadmap for the year ahead.

At Zulu Alpha Kilo, acting on what we believe in is ingrained in our culture. This year, we focused on advancing our DEI strategy with deliberate intention. Through thoughtful planning and the adoption of impactful tools, such as the Petal e-learning platform by Bloom, we have enhanced our ability to support meaningful change.

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

### 1. Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation

We strengthened our DEI framework by aligning initiatives with organizational goals and values. By setting clear objectives and intentionally allocating resources, we've created a sustainable strategy to track progress, identify areas for growth, and maintain accountability.

### 2. Candid Collective

We organized lunch sessions called the Candid Collective throughout the year. These sessions provided an opportunity for open, honest discussions about our business, company culture, and strategies for future growth.

### 3. Petal by Bloom

This year, we subscribed to Petal (owned by Bloom), a full-service HR and DEI consulting firm that helps organizations build anti-oppressive workplace systems for more equitable, inclusive and diverse outcomes.

### 4. CAMSC Certification Commitment

Our Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council certification underscores our commitment to diversity on both an internal and external scale. As a minority-owned business, it reaffirms our dedication to fostering equity and inclusion in every facet of our company.

This progress reflects the dedication of our DEI committee, leadership, employees, and partners. Their hard work and shared vision have moved us closer to creating a workplace—and a future—that is not only inclusive but also innovative and inspiring.

We'd like to thank everyone who has supported us on this journey. We invite you to dive into the details of our 2024 DEI Progress Report.

Sincerely,



**Mike Sutton**  
President & CEO



**Zak Mroueh**  
Founder & Creative Chairman

# THANK YOU TO THE COMMITTEE

We are proud of the incredible efforts our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee made this year. Our committee continues to find opportunities to enhance the learning of all our Zuligans.

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**Andrew Sekine**



**Christina Hill**



**Emily Garvey**



**Heather Segal**



**Jackman Chiu**



**Jaya Rizzi**



**Jonah Flynn**



**Joshua Holloway**



**Lina Benson**



**Ludivine Beltramelli**



**Maddie Estabrooks**



**Meredith Ferguson**



**Samantha Tang**



**Spencer MacEachern**



**Sylvia Stultz**

# OUR PROMISE

We are committed to creating and upholding a diverse and inclusive culture where all Zuligans feel physically and psychologically safe and welcome.

**WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY.**

**WE WILL SUPPORT EACH OTHER.**

**WE WILL LISTEN TO EACH OTHER.**

**WE WILL ALWAYS WELCOME FEEDBACK  
FROM ALL ZULIGANS, REGARDLESS OF  
THEIR POSITION OR JOB TITLE.**

**WE WILL EMPOWER EACH OTHER.**

**WE WILL TAKE ACTION TO CREATE A  
MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE WHERE  
ALL CAN CONTRIBUTE, LEARN, AND  
DEVELOP PROFESSIONALLY.**

**WE WON'T STOP.**

# LAND RECOGNITION

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## ZULU ALPHA KILO ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING

**TORONTO.** The land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

**VANCOUVER.** The land that we operate on is the traditional, unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Tsleil-Waututh nations. We truly respect the land, waters, and air that nourish us all.

**NEW YORK CITY.** The land politically designated as New York City is the homeland of the Lenape (Lenapehoking) who were violently displaced as a result of European settler colonialism over the course of 400 years. The Lenape are a diasporic people who remain closely connected with this land and are its rightful stewards. We also recognize that New York City has one of the largest urban Native American/Indigenous populations in the United States.

# CAMSC CERTIFICATION

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Founded in 2004, the [Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council \(CAMSC\)](#) is a not-for-profit organization that facilitates the growth of Aboriginal and minority-owned businesses by connecting them to procurement opportunities with companies and governments committed to a diverse and inclusive supply chain. We are proud to say that Zulu Alpha Kilo has been CAMSC certified again this year.

These are the basic criteria for certification:

- Must operate in Canada.
- Must be a for-profit enterprise.
- Must supply products or services to other businesses.
- Must be at least 51% owned, managed, and controlled by visible minority(ies) or Aboriginal person(s).
- Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. Due to reciprocity with NMSDC, U.S. citizens and permanent residents are also accepted.



**05/22/2024-05/22/2025**

# THE CALL FOR EQUITY

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In 2020, over 100 Canadian marketing and advertising professionals, including Zulu Alpha Kilo, signed the Call for Equity letter, a commitment to ending the injustice and inequality faced by Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour (BIPOC). This pledge was a call to action to address systemic racism within our industry and to foster meaningful change.

As we reflect on our journey since signing the letter, we acknowledge that the conversation around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has evolved in our industry. While some organizations have deprioritized DEI initiatives, we remain steadfast in our belief that diversity is essential to the creative industry. Different perspectives fuel innovation, challenge conventions, and elevate our work.

Our commitment is exemplified by Zulu Alpha Kilo's identity as a BIPOC-owned business, under the leadership of Zak Mroueh. This underscores our dedication to the principles outlined in the Call for Equity, not just as a pledge but as a foundational value that drives our company forward.

As we look ahead to another new year, we continue to embrace diversity as a strength that shapes our future, enriches our creative work, and helps us foster a more equitable industry for all.



# THE CALL FOR EQUITY PROGRESS

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01



Make a specific, measurable, and public commitment to improve Black, Indigenous and POC representation at all levels of staffing, especially senior and leadership positions

02



Track and publicly report your workforce diversity data on an annual basis to create accountability for the industry

03



Audit company policies and culture to ensure the environment we work in is more equitable and inclusive to a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives

04



Provide extensive bias training to HR employees and all levels of management, and ask your teams and leaders to get simple constructive human rights training and certification such as that provided by The Ontario Human Rights Commission at: [www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/human-rights-101](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/human-rights-101)

05



Extend outreach to a more diverse representation of colleges, universities, and art schools and support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for Black, Indigenous and POC employees

06



Expand residencies and internship programs to candidates with transferable skills who may not have taken a traditional educational path toward advertising and marketing

07



Create, fund, and support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for Black, Indigenous and POC employees

08



Invest in management and leadership training, as well as mentorship, sponsorship, and other career development programs for Black, Indigenous and POC employees

09



Require all leaders to actively participate in company Diversity & Inclusion initiatives and tie success in those initiatives to bonus compensation

10



Create a Diversity & Inclusion committee made up of Black, Indigenous and POC employees to help shape diversity & inclusion policy and monitor its progress

11



Establish a diversity review panel to stem the spread of stereotypes in creative work and ensure offensive or culturally insensitive work is never published

12



Introduce a wage equity plan to ensure that women and Black, Indigenous and POC are being compensated fairly



Completed



In progress



Not started

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Even though some of these actions have been identified as completed, we know we need to continue to our learning journey. We look forward to more opportunities to shape a culture of inclusivity and understanding.



# ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES AT ZULU ALPHA KILO

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Many of the principles of diverse, equitable, and inclusive organizations were embedded in Zulu's operating philosophy at the very beginning. Strategies and intentions are important, but all that truly matters is action. Below and in the following are some of the actions and initiatives we implemented throughout the year.

## CANDID COLLECTIVE INITIATIVE

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To promote transparency, we host frequent lunch sessions called "The Candid Collective" where employees have lunch with our President & CEO. To date, more than 80 Zuligans have joined these lunch sessions to provide feedback and ideas to make the agency better.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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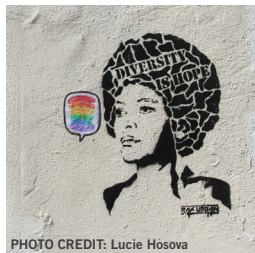


PHOTO CREDIT: Lucie Hosova

In February, we marked Black History Month with a thoughtfully curated email sent to all our Toronto, Vancouver, and New York offices. This communication showcased events, resources, and opportunities to honour Black history, culture, and achievements.

The email featured a variety of curated activities tailored to each city, including local events, exhibitions, and performances highlighting the contributions of Black communities. We also provided online learning resources, such as webinars, documentaries, and articles, to encourage self-education and deeper engagement with Black history and its significance.

Black History Month served as an important reminder of our collective responsibility to continue learning, reflecting, and acting to support equity within our organization and beyond.

# WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DAY

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PANEL

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For the fourth consecutive year, our female leaders hosted an inspiring and engaging Q&A session to celebrate Women's International Day. This panel provided a platform for our leaders to share their insights on leadership, their unique career journeys, and the invaluable qualities that women bring to leadership roles.

The session fostered open and honest conversations on a wide range of topics, including negotiation, vulnerability, resilience, setting boundaries, overcoming fears, leveraging strengths, learning from failures, and sharing experiences. These discussions aimed to mentor and empower future female leaders, providing them with tools, guidance, and inspiration to navigate their own paths to success.

This annual event reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting women in leadership and creating an environment where diverse voices and perspectives are celebrated and championed.



**SARAH DAYUS**

Director of Post-Production  
& Operations, Zulubot TOR



**LAURA DUBCOVSKY**

Executive Producer,  
Zulu Alpha Kilo TOR



**EMILY GARVEY**

Head of Strategy,  
Zulu Alpha Kilo NY



**JENNY GLOVER**

Chief Creative Officer,  
Zulu Alpha Kilo TOR



**NICOLE PAGANO**

Account Supervisor,  
Zulu Alpha Kilo TOR



**HEATHER SEGAL**

Chief Strategy Officer,  
Zulu Alpha Kilo TOR

## INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

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On May 17th, we observed the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia with a special screening of Chris Bergeron's inspiring talk.

Chris Bergeron's story is both powerful and deeply resonant, offering insights into the importance of authenticity, resilience, and inclusion.

This screening went beyond simply watching a talk—it was an opportunity for our team to engage with themes of understanding, empathy, and personal growth. It served as a reminder of the importance of fostering a workplace and community that champions diversity and supports every individual's right to be themselves.

*For those interested in learning more, you can explore this thoughtful review of their work:*  
[Montreal Review of Books.](#)



## PARTNERS' PLEDGE

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Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion continues to extend beyond our agency, fostering deeper collaboration with our production partners. We have continued to collaborate and encourage our partners to bring similar change in their community with their circles of influence and to invite underrepresented talent in their industry to join their partner roster. Together, we hope to enrich our perspectives, while fostering a collective responsibility to drive positive change and inclusivity. By holding each other accountable, we aim to build an ecosystem that transcends organizational boundaries, where diversity and inclusion are the foundation of everything we do.



# VOLUNTEER DAY

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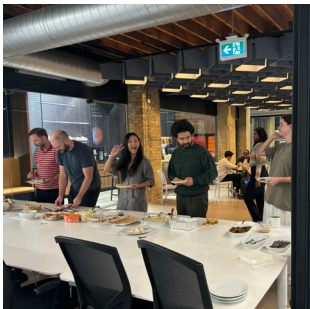
In 2024, we enhanced our internal DEI platform with a dedicated page highlighting organizations in Toronto, Vancouver, and New York that offer individual volunteering opportunities. This resource is designed to encourage our Zuligans to make the most of their annual Volunteer Day by connecting them with causes they care about. By partnering with local initiatives, we aim to support our communities while fostering a culture of giving back.



## NATIONAL TRUTH & RECONCILIATION DAY

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For National Truth and Reconciliation Day, we organized a potluck in our Toronto office, encouraging Zuligans to prepare and share dishes with the team. This event brought everyone together to reflect on the day's significance while fostering community through food. Additionally, we raised funds in support of imagineNATIVE, helping amplify Indigenous voices and storytelling.



## PETAL BY BLOOM, DEI LEARNING MODULES

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This year, one of our most significant DEI initiatives is a dedicated effort to equip every Zuligan with the tools and knowledge to actively contribute to a more inclusive and equitable workplace. By fostering understanding and creating opportunities for meaningful growth, we aim to make inclusivity a cornerstone of our culture.

To set the tone and lead by example, our DEI team recently invested in advanced training through Petal by Bloom, a robust DEI training platform. This experience offered valuable insights into key DEI concepts and practices, which we've since incorporated into our onboarding materials. This ensures that every new team member starts their journey with a strong foundation in inclusivity, aligning them with Zulu's core values from day one.

Building on this foundation, we created a DEI Hub that allows all Zuligans to participate in a series of learning modules. These thoughtfully curated resources are designed to deepen our understanding of systemic inequities, celebrate diversity, and foster allyship in all areas of our work and interactions. This initiative is not only about individual learning but also about creating a workplace where everyone feels respected, supported, and empowered.

This represents our commitment to ongoing education and shared accountability. We're thankful to our Zuligans for their commitment in completing this important initiative. Together, we're creating a workplace where everyone can thrive.



## 20DOORS SCHOLARSHIP FUND & MENTORSHIP

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We are now in the fourth year of our 20Doors Scholarship Fund. The initiative was launched by Zulu Alpha Kilo Founder and Creative Chairman, Zak Mroueh and the fund covers the tuition for BIPOC candidates to complete a year-long post-graduate program in copywriting or art direction. This year we are expanding the scholarship eligibility to our other office locations in New York and Vancouver.

Our 2023 recipients have now graduated and have started creative roles within our industry, including with our agency. We are proud to continue to mentor our current and past recipients on an ongoing basis with our Founder and Creative Chairman, as well as our creative leadership team. Most recently, we hosted a mentorship session with our Global Head of Talent Attraction to help recipients develop their personal brand and demonstrate the art of standing out when looking for a role in the industry.



**FAËL FRANÇOIS**  
2021 Recipient



**SARAH AZIZ**  
2021 Recipient



**JULIAN CADOGAN**  
2021 Recipient



**JAY BAWAR**  
2022 Recipient



**DEJI OLUBUSI**  
2022 Recipient



**LINA ZHU**  
2022 Recipient



**ADEMOYE OLUWATONI SOPHIE**  
2022 Recipient



**JOSE BUA**  
2022 Recipient



**VARISHA AGGARWAL**  
2023 Recipient



**CONRAD OSEI-BONSU**  
2023 Recipient



**MAKONNEN KENYA**  
2023 Recipient



**ONEIL BLACK**  
2023 Recipient

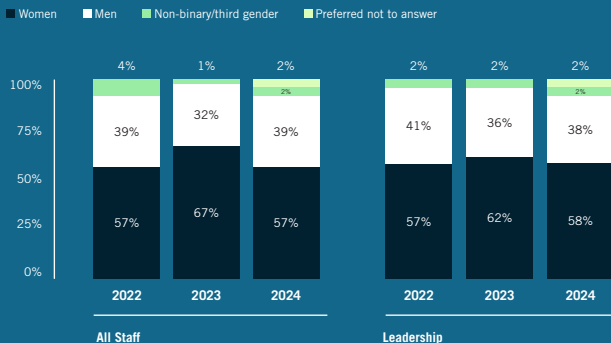


# DIVERSITY SURVEY RESULTS AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS

This is the fifth year Zulu Alpha Kilo has formally measured diversity within the agency. This ongoing survey remains a helpful tool to understand how our agency is reflecting the communities we work in. As an agency, Z.A.K. has never been satisfied with business as usual, and this data over time shows an agency continuing to change and reshape itself.

## OUR AGENCY AT A GLANCE

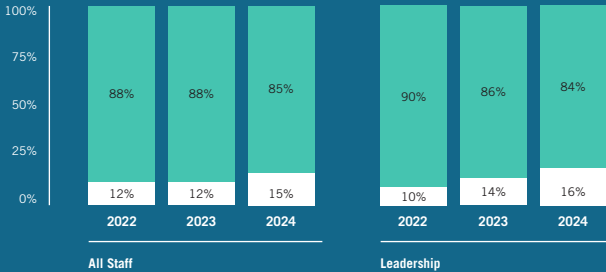
### GENDER DIVERSITY



The agency remains majority women, both at a staff and leadership level, including CSO, CCO, COO, and CFO.

## IDENTIFIES AS LGBTQ2S+

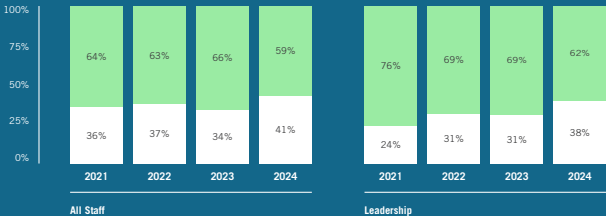
■ Yes ■ No



The share of the agency who identifies as LGBTQ+ has grown slowly over the last 3 years, increasing by 6 points within the leadership team over the last 2 years.

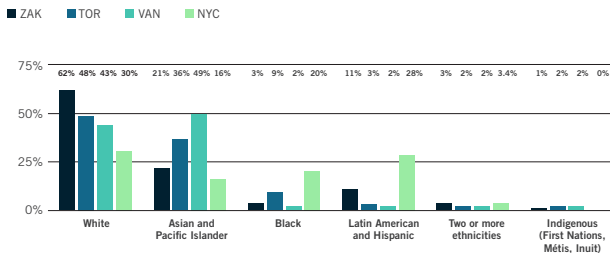
## ETHNICITY / RACIAL DIVERSITY

■ BIPOC ■ White



In our first year measuring data (2020) representation of BIPOC talent among agency staff and leadership was 26% and 15% respectively. Representation has significantly changed in the last 5 years with BIPOC talent increasing by 15 points at the staff level and 23 points at the leadership level.

## ETHNICITY / RACIAL DIVERSITY

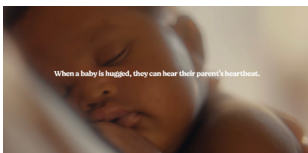


Looking more deeply at the data still reveals gaps with Black, Latino and Indigenous employees, especially in comparison to the NYC market.

Through initiatives like 20Doors (which provides a path from school to jobs for underrepresented young talent), we continue to prioritize addressing the unique structural barriers faced by Black and Indigenous employees in the advertising industry. As we grow, our goal is for our agency offices to reflect the places we call home.

## THANK YOU TO OUR CLIENTS

We are thankful to all our clients for their commitment as they continue with us on this journey to support more diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in all aspects of our business.



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## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We're continuing our efforts to ensure diversity with our talent casting as well as seek out diversity with our production partners and their crews. A big thank-you to all our partners in the industry for helping us make a difference.

# MOVING FORWARD

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Looking ahead, we will continue to enhance our DEI strategy, merging wellness, social initiatives, and DEI efforts into a unified framework. We are also integrating sustainability into our mandate, recognizing that a truly inclusive workplace also prioritizes the well-being and social responsibility of our community.

As our organization grows, we will honour the unique needs and challenges of each office, respecting regional differences while aligning around our shared goal. We understand that each office will move at its own pace, but together, we will ensure that everyone contributes to our collective mission.

Moving forward, we remain committed to a holistic approach to DEI—one that celebrates diversity, upholds equity, and integrates inclusion into the very fabric of our agency's culture. By doing so, we are not just shaping a workplace but creating a community that thrives on the strength of its diversity and the inclusivity of its culture.