A—B &

Aspen

October 2023
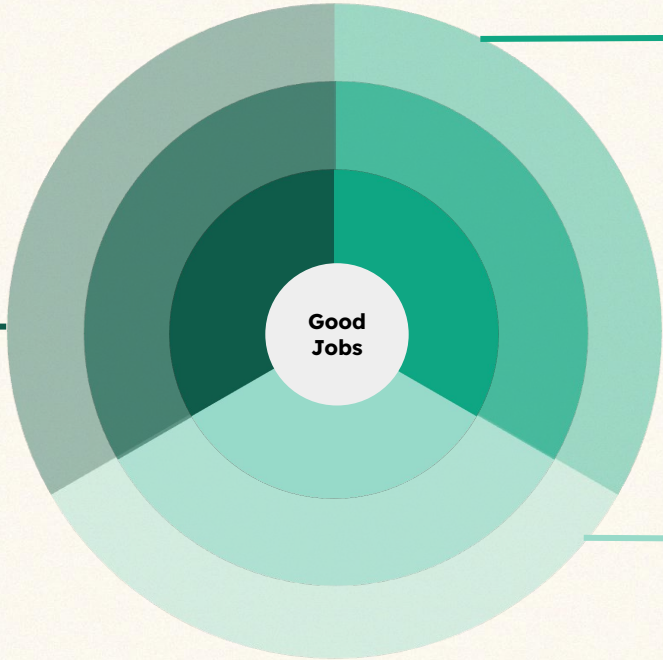
Job Quality
Narrative Playbook

01. **Approach**

This isn't a presentation about the quality of jobs, it's about **the qualities that define the people** who create them

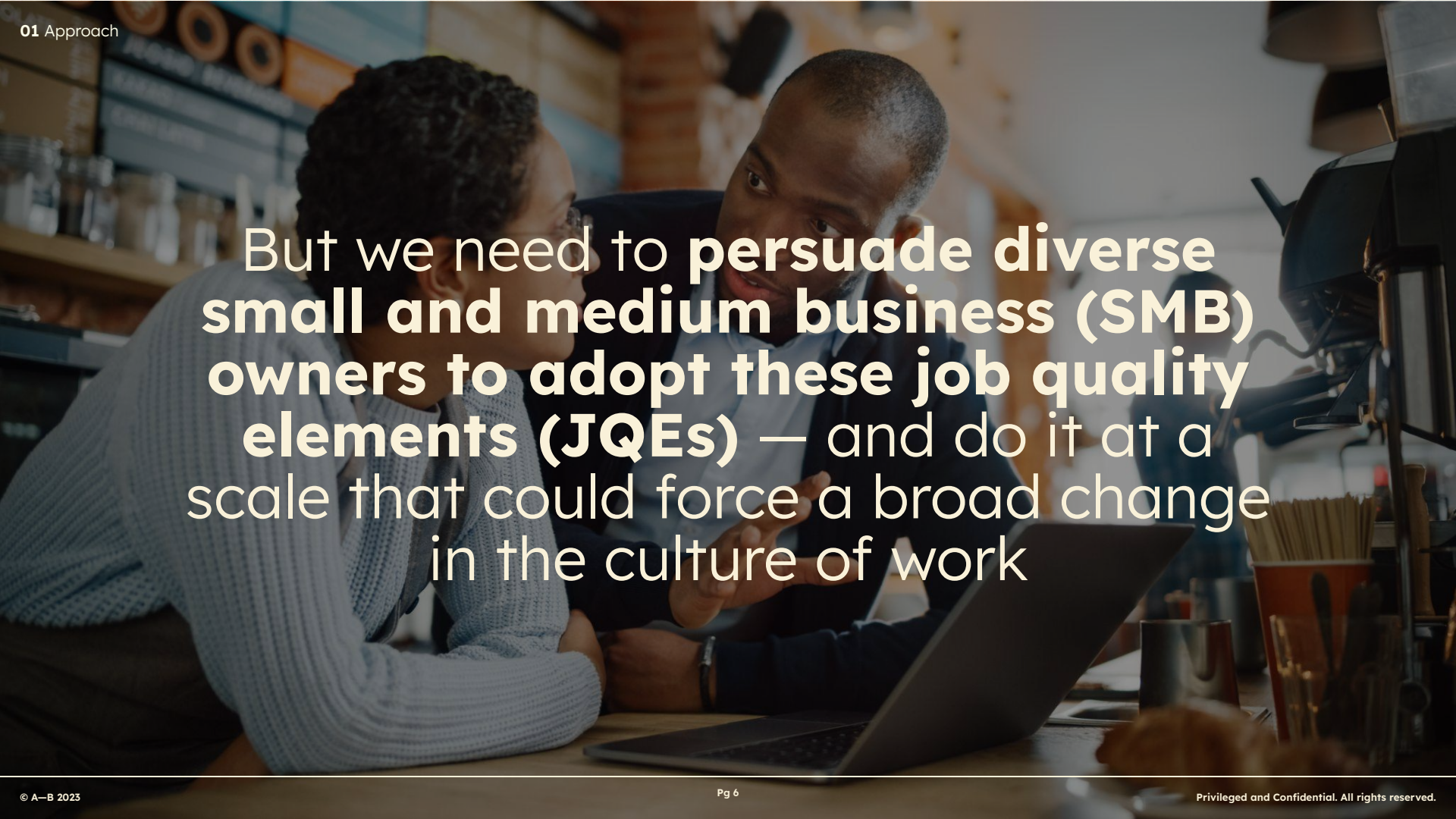# We know what makes a job
high quality

Equity, Respect & Voice

• Organizational and management culture, policies, and practices that
  1. Are transparent and enable accountability
  2. Support a sense of belonging and purpose
  3. Advance DEIA
  4. Address discrimination

• Ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices

Economic Stability

• Stable, family-sustaining pay

• Sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits

• Fair, reliable scheduling practices

• Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions

Good Jobs

Economic Mobility

• Clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways

• Accessible, paid training and development opportunities

• Wealth-building opportunities

But we need to **persuade diverse small and medium business (SMB) owners to adopt these job quality elements (JQEs)** — and do it at a scale that could force a broad change in the culture of work

We used a three part methodology to uncover the key influences and **values driving SMB owners**

Metaphor Elicitation

A two-round qualitative design, where participants are asked to submit links to images and sounds related to key prompts, and then verbally discuss them.

N = 24

Message Testing

Five messages on the basis of our ME results. We used a survey experiment to test which of these five messages were the most effective at persuading SMB owners and CDFIs of the importance of job quality.

N = 1,267

Content Test

Focused on the two most effective messages from Phase 2, disaggregated into four narrow messages, and expressed through visual implementations (fliers) to test the effectiveness of these real-world materials.

N = 910

By speaking to a diversity of SMB owners to prioritize **equity**

Age

53.2%
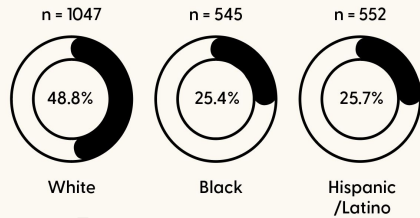
of respondents were between 30 and 49 years old

Education

40.3%
n = 865

40.3% of respondents **possess a Bachelor's degree or higher**

Race

n = 1047
48.8%
White

n = 545
25.4%
Black

n = 552
25.7%
Hispanic /Latino

Gender Identity

n = 1103
51.4%
Female

n = 1064
49.6%
Male

n = 10
.005%
Other Gender /Non-Binary

SMB Size

n = 1488
69.4%
small business owners with 1-10 employees

n = 646
30.1%
medium business owners with 11-50 employees

Industry

317
Construction

291
Retail

165
Professional Services

157
Arts & Recreation

128
Manufacturing

122
Wholesale

112
Health & Social Services

106
Finance & Insurance

101
Real Estate & Leasing

91
Agri-culture

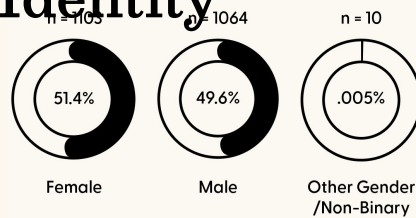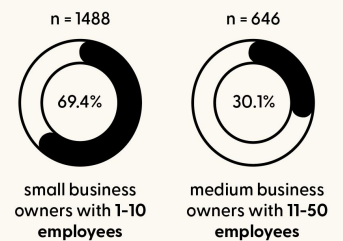To land on the most comprehensive picture of SMB owners and identify new opportunities to **bring JQE from the margins to the center of their businesses**

- Audience analysis to understand SMB owners and the tensions blocking them from investing in job quality

- Core narrative that synthesizes the problem and articulates the solutions that will break through

- Messaging guidance for financial intermediaries to talk to SMB owners about job quality

- Sample applications ready to be used in communications to SMB owners from financial intermediaries

This playbook contains the tools to **seize on a unique moment** of challenge and opportunity for SMB owners

- It's designed to guide financial intermediaries to galvanize SMB owners to invest in job quality

- It's tailored to engage in conversations surrounding the changing concept of work and employer expectations

- It's built for this moment, where small business owners are adapting to a new path forward in an evolving economic landscape

Inside the Minds of

02. **SMB Owners**

As **entrepreneurs**, SMB owners are...

| Strong Leaders | Independent | Innovative | Positive |

But as daily **managers**, SMB owners feel...

| Challenged by "Impostor Syndrome" | Isolated and Beholden | Powerless to Compete for Top Talent | Unable to Connect the Dots |

We need to resolve this **paradox** and offer JQE as a way to **reframe and empower them as leaders of the business and community**

Strong Leaders	Independent	Innovative	Positive
Challenged by "Impostor Syndrome"	Isolated and Beholden	Powerless to Compete for Top Talent	Unable to Connect the Dots

01.

What we heard
Challenged by "Impostor Syndrome"

What We Miss

All too often, we talk about job quality by talking about how it can make SMB owners more money.

How It Impacts JQE

SMB owners start a business to be independent, have control, innovate, and give back to their communities— not to make more money. Talking about the bottom line triggers their anxieties.

Highlights from our Research:

An online sample of > 10,000 SMB owners showed that their top psychological drivers are:
- Creativity
- Proving competence
- Expressing individuality

"You didn't want to feel it was all just about getting rich. It was really more about the product and the process and working together."

- Interview participant

In a randomized controlled trial, messages that appealed to the bottom line failed to move SMB owners on any outcome.

01.

Where we move them

Validated as Leaders

SMB owner-submitted images about business owners

How we do it

Explain job quality investments as a means of building their status as a community leader

02.

What we heard
Isolated and Beholden

What We Miss

SMB owners start business to have control and freedom, but often end up feeling isolated inside their businesses.

How It Impacts JQE

This feeling of being trapped can make them resentful of their employees whose lives are not tied to the business, reducing investments in job quality.

Highlights from our Research:

SMB owners feel the weight of responsibility for all of those who depend on them.

"A lot of people think when you're a business owner you're providing for yourself but the reality is you're really providing for everybody else... the owner is providing so much, and only taking so much for themselves."

- Interview participant

They experience their days as an unending stack of burdensome tasks: As soon as one task is completed, many more are added, precluding a sense of accomplishment or mastery.

02.

Where we move them

Supported and in Control

SMB owner-submitted images about business owners

The Solution

Offer job quality as a way to take control and build internal leverage to manage the tensions they face

03.

What we heard
Powerless to Compete for Top Talent

What We Get Wrong

SMB owners feel that they have no control over the job market. Good talent feels hard to find and even harder to keep long term—especially for some of the less glamorous positions they need to fill.

How It Impacts JQE

SMB owners see job quality as another area where they have to give up resources and yet still fail against larger businesses and corporations.

Highlights from our Research:

Employers observe employees' autonomy to leave at any time for a better deal. This freedom to switch – a luxury SMB owners do not share – fuels SMB owners' constant worry about employee retention.

"Big thing is money… we're a small business, one of our biggest hardships is always trying to keep people because there can always be better benefits or better pay elsewhere."

-    Interview participant

SMB owners' fears over losing control of employees underlie fantasies featuring a loyal and obedient workforce.

03.

Where we move them

Having a Competitive Edge

The Solution

Make job quality an attainable practice to open doors for good talent to stay and make the business more competitive

SMB owner-submitted images about business owners

04.

What we heard

Unable to Connect the Dots

What We Get Wrong

SMB owners, particularly Black + Latinx owners, see their businesses as an opportunity to leave a positive impact on their communities

How It Impacts JQE

SMB owners don't make the connection between providing quality jobs as a way to grow their status and impact on the community

Highlights from our Research:

Testing revealed that framing JQE as a means to achieve status in one's community is most successful in building support for JQE.

"We're a neighborhood restaurant. So if our community around the restaurant don't have access to money or jobs then they won't be able to support their business—that will give us no growth in the community."

- Interview participant

Content testing demonstrated that images and text connecting SMB owners to their community are most successful in getting SMB owners to learn more about JQE.

04.

Where we move them
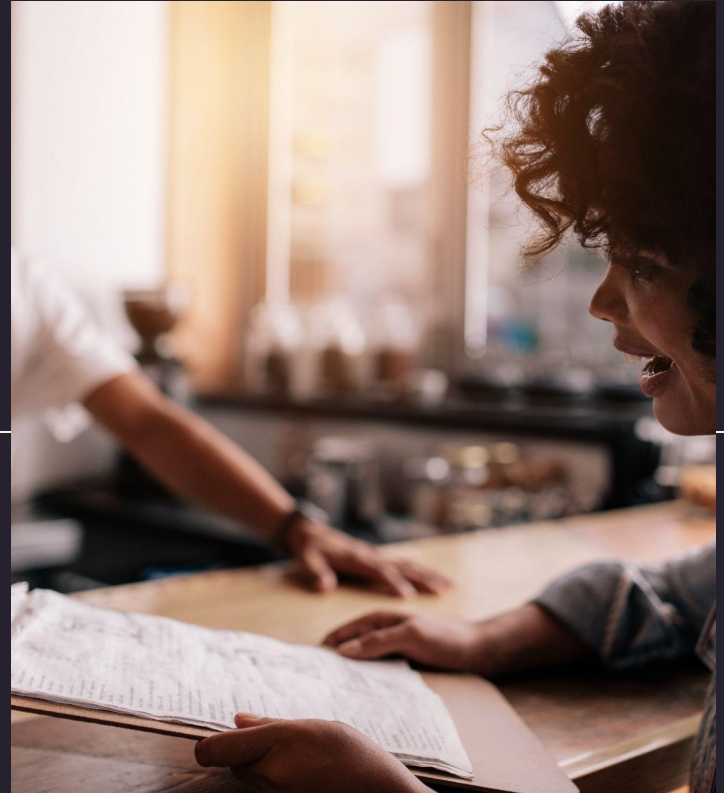
Leaving an Impact

The Solution

Position great quality jobs as a way to improve employee's lives so they can thrive and give back in the community, while bolstering SMB owners' reputation

SMB owner-submitted images about business owners

03. **Applications**

From:
EOP

To:
Financial Intermediaries

Objective:
Give them the tools to talk to SMB owners about JQE

From:
CDFI

To:
Established SMB owner

Objective:
Persuade them to invest in JQE to scale their business

Intervention Point:
Powerless to Compete for Top Talent

RESPECT >
FREE DINNERS

Good employees are hard to find and even harder to keep. But you don't need to buy fancy dinners or expensive perks tables to entice them. You have the tools to offer them stability, mobility, and respect—and that's more valuable than any foosball table.

Ask us how you can grow job quality in your business

12:00

⬀ Click to Know more

📞 Get in touch With us
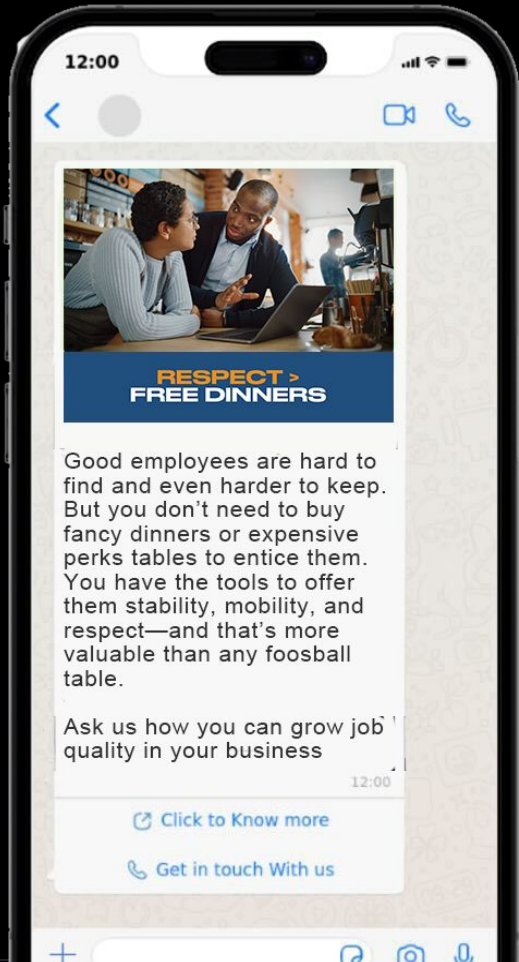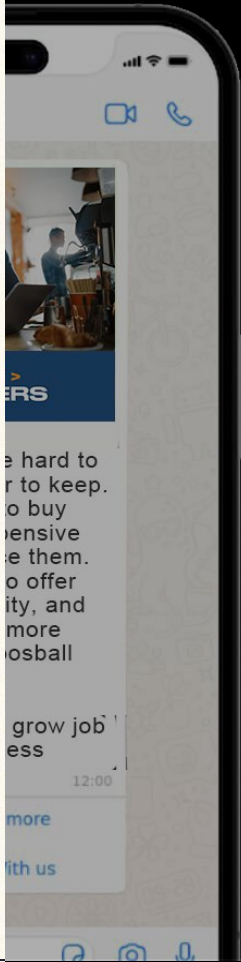
From:
CDFI

To:
New SMB owner

Objective:
Persuade them to build their business with JQE in mind

Intervention Point:
Challenged with "Impostor Syndrome"

What you **show** is as important as what you say —and our testing revealed the best practices

Based on <u>findings from content testing</u>

👍🏿 **Do**

👎🏾 **Don't**

Showcase people's faces – and smiling faces. Positive emotions are contagious and persuasive

Show people with neutral or negative expressions, or with their backs turned to the camera.

What you **show** is as important as what you say—and our testing revealed the best practices

*Based on <u>findings from content testing</u>

👍 **Do**

👎 **Don't**

**Share authentic moments
of people in their natural environment**

**Choose staged photos with posed
models or crowds**

What you **show** is as important as what you say—and our testing revealed the best practices

Based on <u>findings from content testing</u>

👍 **Do**

👎 **Don't**

Use imagery of happy smiling people interacting with each other and with the community

Use imagery of people by themselves, looking dissatisfied or unhappy

04. **Pop Quiz!**

01.

Which one is **not** a core motivator for SMB owners?

A   Freedom

B   Innovation

C   Social Status

D   Money

01.

Which one is **not** a core motivator for SMB owners?

A — Freedom

B — Innovation

C — Social Status

D — Money
SMB owners see money as a means to an end, not the core motivator. Money creates more anxiety than motivation

02.

What message is the most successful **among SMB owners?**

A
Our business is run like a swiss watch. The products, the clients, the service and our workers all have to be in the right place, moving at the right time.

B
A key part of ***growing your business is becoming a model for excellent service.*** If we can outperform our competition, and be known as being the best on the block, then our business will thrive.

C
Business owners know that investing in high-quality raw materials will pay off in the end. ***The most important thing a business owner must understand is that you have to spend money to make money.***

D
We know that if we focus our goals on helping others, those people will help our business grow as well. ***Having a give-and-take relationship with our community is most important.***

02.

What message is the most successful **among SMB owners?**

A ***Our business is run like a swiss watch.*** The products, the clients, the service and our workers all have to be in the right place, moving at the right time.

B A key part of ***growing your business is becoming a model for excellent service.*** If we can outperform our competition, and be known as being the best on the block, then our business will thrive.

C Business owners know that investing in high-quality raw materials will pay off in the end. ***The most important thing a business owner must understand is that you have to spend money to make money.***

D We know that if we focus our goals on helping others, those people will help our business grow as well. ***Having a give-and-take relationship with our community is most important.*** **SMB owners see themselves as leaders in their communities, driving them to give back.**

03.

Which image would be most effective **on a JQE flyer?**

A

B

03.

Which image would be most effective **on a JQE flyer?**

A

SMB owners want to **see themselves** — moments engaging with their community are the best.

B

04.

What is a key motivator for **Black + Latinx SMB owners?**

A   Social / Professional Status

B   Creativity

C   Expressing Individuality

D   Proving Competence / Skills

04.

What is a key motivator for **Black + Latinx SMB owners?**

A Social / Professional Status — Black + Latinx SMB owners want to be recognized within their community.

B Creativity

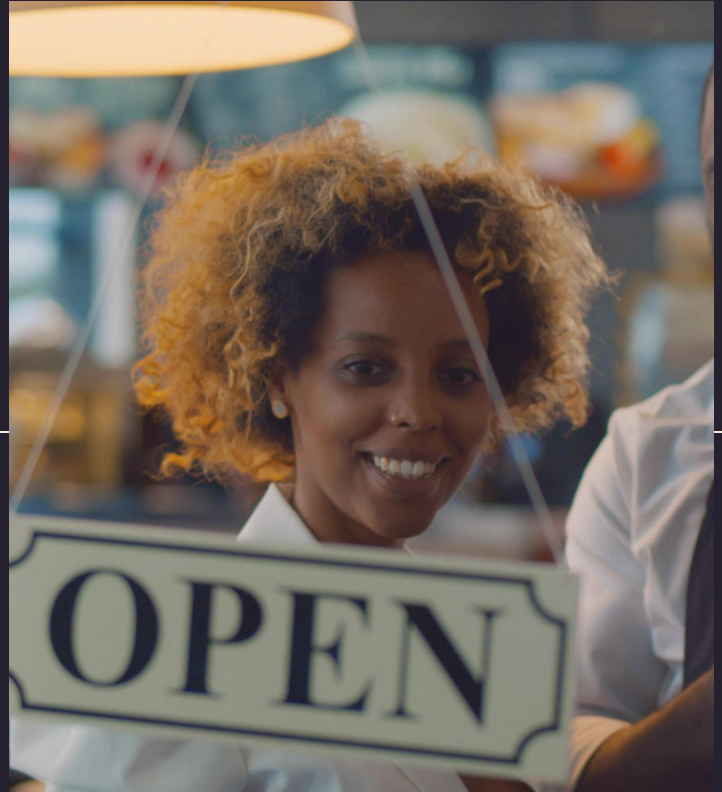**C** Expressing Individuality

D Proving Competence / Skills

Thank you

05. **Appendix**

Metaphor Elicitation

Insights

March 22, 2023
Prepared for The Aspen Institute

N=24, Conducted January - February 2023
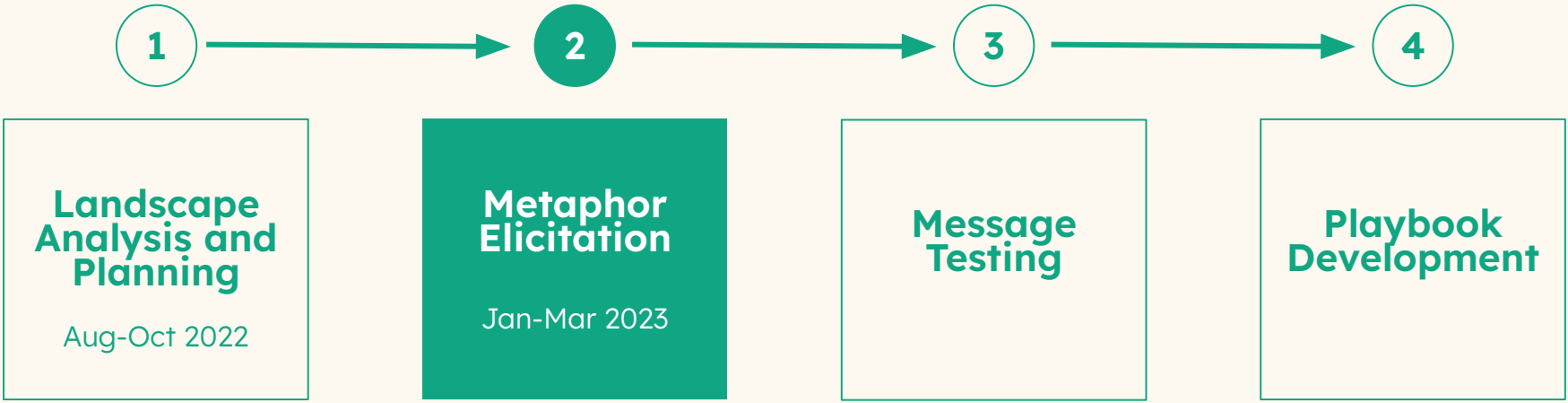
01. **Process + Objectives**

02. **Methodology**

03. **Insights + Results**

04. **Audiences**

05. **Appendix**

01. **Process + Objectives**

Project framework and checkpoints

Narrative Lab Process

1 → **2** → **3** → **4**

Landscape Analysis and Planning

Aug-Oct 2022

Metaphor Elicitation

Jan-Mar 2023

Message Testing

Playbook Development

Job Quality Narrative Lab Process

2 ──────────► **Current Phase**

Metaphor Elicitation

Jan-Mar 2023

➔ Conduct interviews with small-to midsize business owners and supporting institutions (CDFIs & small business associations)

➔ Understand business owners' perceptions of job quality

➔ Examine dimensions of job quality
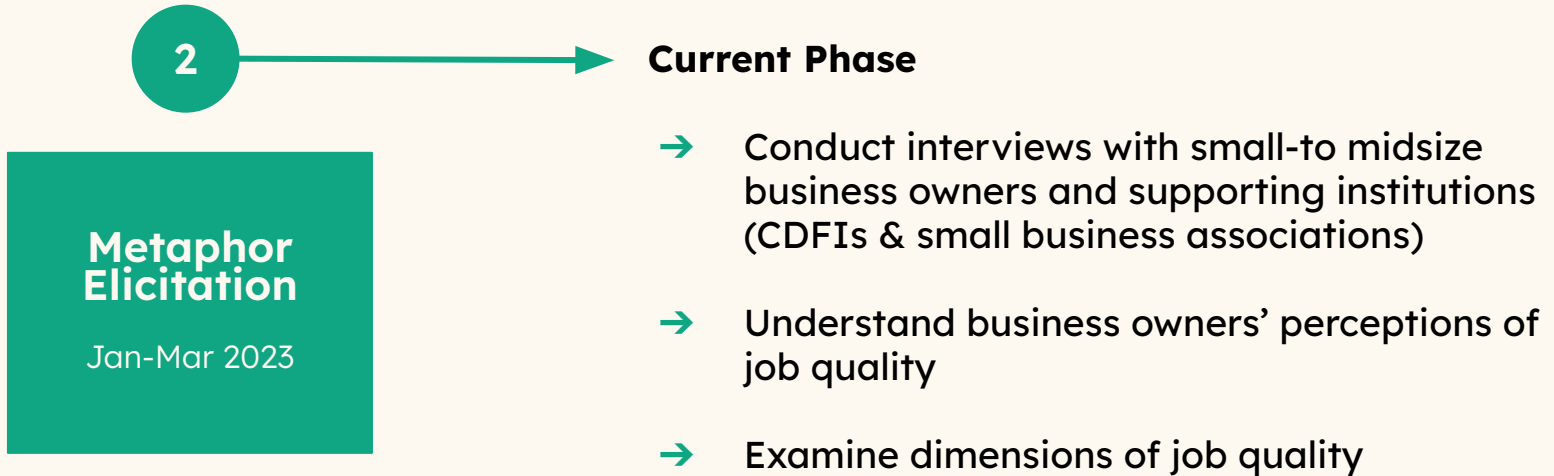
Good Job Quality Elements

01. **Equity, Respect, and Voice**
    a.   Employee satisfaction

02. **Economic Stability**
    a.   Compensation
    b.   Benefits

03. **Economic Mobility**
    a.   Incentives
    b.   Professional growth
    c.   Wealth-building

Good Jobs: A Working Definition

Economic Stability

- ❑ Stable, family-sustaining pay
- ❑ Sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits
- ❑ Fair, reliable scheduling practices
- ❑ Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions

Economic Mobility

- ❑ Clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways
- ❑ Accessible, paid training and development opportunities
- ❑ Wealth-building opportunities

Good Jobs

Equity, Respect & Voice

- ❑ Organizational and management culture, policies, and practices that:
  - ❑ are transparent and enable accountability
  - ❑ support a sense of belonging and purpose
  - ❑ advance DEIA*
  - ❑ and address discrimination.
- ❑ Ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices
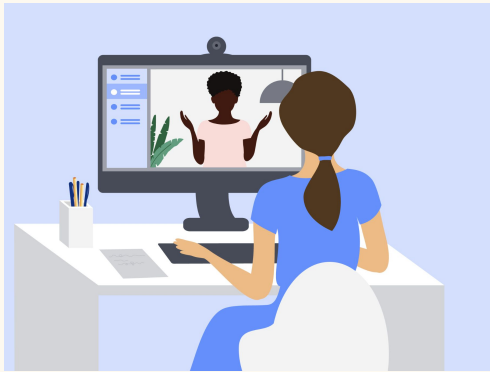
*DEIA: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

02. **Methodology**

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS - METAPHOR ELICITATION

Groundbreaking research methods for **consumer research** & **narrative building**

Metaphor 1

Metaphor 2

•••

Metaphor 6

I feel/believe…

I think…

A—B conducts metaphor elicitation to learn about participants' thoughts and feelings through **participant-supplied data** and 60-minute in-depth, **one-on-one interviews**.
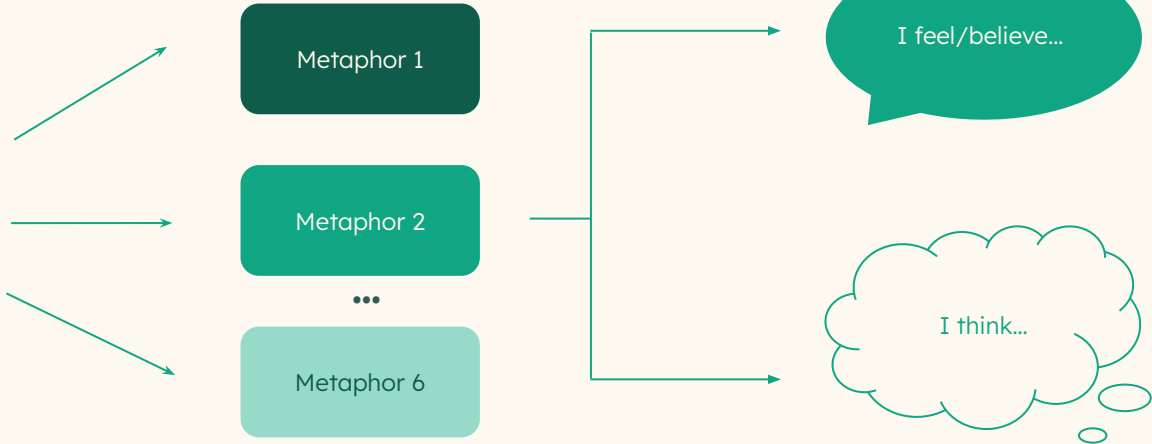
Individuals use **at least 6** metaphors for each minute of speech. Metaphors are the **key to human expression**.

We extract the non-verbal attitudes of a people by exploring **both conscious and non-conscious** associations moving past the conscious mind to uncover **deeper thoughts and feelings.**

Methodology

01. **Fielding:** Aspen Institute EOP and A—B recruited participants to participate in a multi-day research exercise conducted in-house over two nonconsecutive days.

02. **Introduction:** Participants completed a 15-minute introductory session to where the requirements and parameters of the study were described.

03. **Survey:** Participants completed an online survey that requested that participants provide sounds, images and a story vignette.

04. **In-Depth Interview:** A—B conducted in-depth interviews with 24 participants.

05. **Analysis:** A–B is in the process of analyzing three data points: the survey written responses, the submitted images and sounds, and the verbal data from interviews.

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Participants - **Full Sample**

01. **Entities:**
- 3 - CDFIs
- 1 - Small business association
- 20 - Business owners

02. **Business Size (SMB = 20):**
- 13 have 10 or fewer full-time employees
- 7 have more than 10 full-time employees

03. **Industries (SMB = 20):**
- 4 Educational Services
- 4 Other Services
- 3 Retail Trade
- 3 Accomodation and Food Services
- 2 Manufacturing
- 1 Agriculture, Forestry
- 1 Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
- 1 Health Care and Social Assistance
- 1 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

04. **Number of full-time W-2 employees (SMB =20):**
- 1 - have zero W-2 employees
- 4 - have one W-2 employee
- 6 - have 2-5 W-2 employees
- 9 - have 6 or more W-2 employees

05. **Race & ethnicity:** Self-identified as:
- 5 - Black / African American
- 6 - White Latinx
- 9 - White
- 2 - Asian
- 2 - Mixed Race

06. **Gender identity:** Respondents self-identified as:
- 7 - Male
- 17 - Female

07. **Geography** (in US):
- 7 - West
- 4 - South
- 6 - Northeast
- 5 - Midwest
- 2 - East

03. **Insights + Results**

What We Found

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Values, Drivers, and Behaviors

01. **Values:** *What do SMB owners say they care about?*

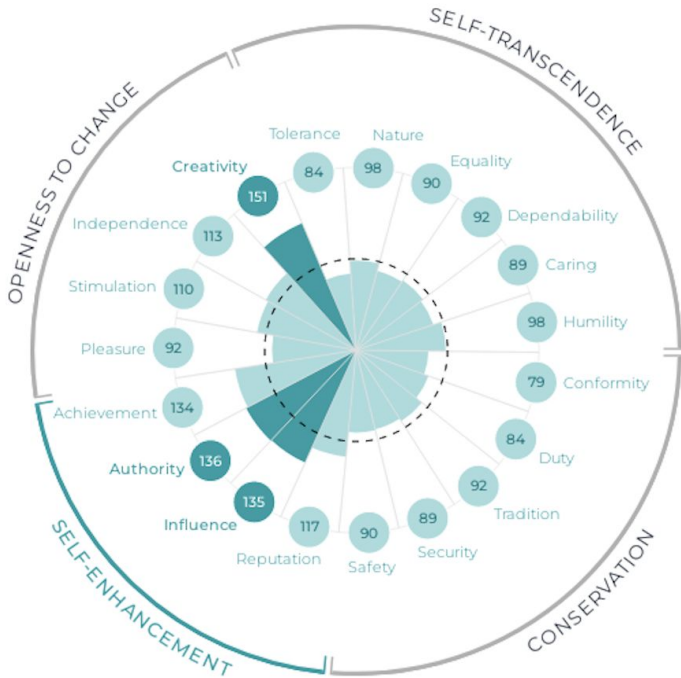02. **Drivers:** *What are the psychological drivers of SMB owners?*

03. **Behaviors:** *What do SMB owners do or not do?*

04. **Audience Segments** among SMB Owners

01. **Values**

What do SMB owners say they care about?

SMB owners care most about self-oriented values such as
freedom, social power, social status and money

Source: Resonate

Self-enhancement: May, or may desire to, prioritize their own interests above those of others. May seek self-protection and the avoidance of anxiety rather than personal growth. May have a personal (self) focus rather than a social (other) focus.

151 - Creativity - Freedom to Be Creative: May be, or may desire to be, more individualistic, adaptive, and imaginative. Life is an exploration and learning about new ideas and being imaginative is important.

136 - Authority - Being in Charge and Directing People: May be, or may desire to be, more likely to exercise control, be authoritative, and be seen as influential. May be more likely to be decisive and direct, to take risks to gain rewards, to have high self-confidence, and to be motivated by solving challenging problems. Life is about social power and being in control.

135 - Influence - Acquiring Wealth and Influence: May be, or may desire to be, more likely to accumulate wealth, and the status and power that comes from money and material possessions. May also be more outgoing, self-disciplined, and organized; and less soft-hearted. Life is about money and social status.

*Numbers indicate indexes relative to online adult population. Numbers over 100 indicate that this group *over*-indexes on a trait. Numbers under 100 indicate that this group *under*-index on a trait.

They are low in other-oriented values such as **equality** and **conformity**
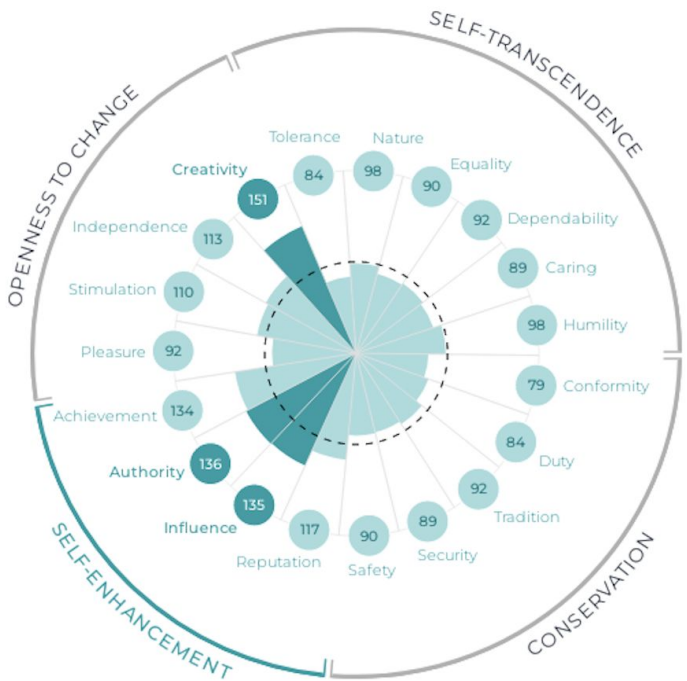
Source: Resonate

Self-transcendence: May, or may desire to, rise above their own interests an emphasize those of others. May seek personal growth rather than self-protection and the avoidance of anxiety. May have a social others focus rather than a personal

92 - Dependability: May, or may desire to, emphasize the importance of being dependable, responsible, and faithful to family and friends. Life is about being a reliable and trustworthy friend.

90 - Equality: May, or may desire to, emphasize the equality and protection of all people. Life is about social justice.

84 - Duty: May, or may desire to, emphasize adherence to obligations, rules and laws. May also be more self-disciplined, obedient, organized and dependable.

79 - Conformity: May, or may desire to, emphasize politeness and tactfulness, and may seek to avoid upsetting or harming others. Life is about courteousness and civility.

*Numbers indicate indexes relative to online adult population. Numbers over 100 indicate that this group *over*-indexes on a trait. Numbers under 100 indicate that this group *under*-index on a trait.

Black + Latinx SMB owners over-index on self-enhancement values, especially money and status
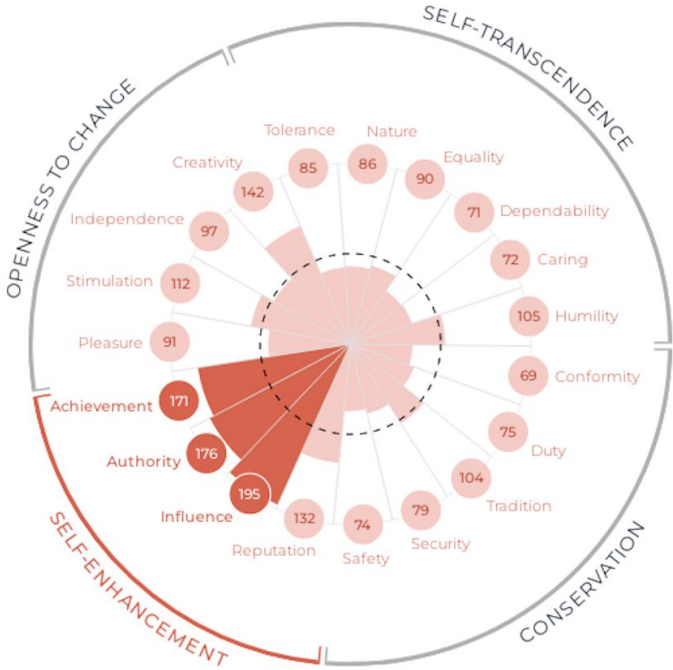
Source: Resonate

Self-enhancement: May, or may desire to, prioritize their own interests above those of others. May seek self-protection and the avoidance of anxiety rather than personal growth. May have a personal (self) focus rather than a social (other) focus.

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176 - Authority - Being in Charge and Directing People: May be, or may desire to be, more likely to exercise control, be authoritative, and be seen as influential. May be more likely to be decisive and direct, to take risks to gain rewards, to have high self-confidence, and to be motivated by solving challenging problems. Life is about social power and being in control.

171 - Achievement - Show Abilities and Be Admired: May, or may desire to, seek success and the admiration of others for being successful. Ambitiousness and determination may be distinguishing attributes. Life is about getting ahead, "winning," and impressing others

*Numbers indicate indexes relative to online adult population. Numbers over 100 indicate that this group *over*-indexes on a trait. Numbers under 100 indicate that this group *under*-index on a trait.

White SMB owners **over-index** on values related to **openness to change**
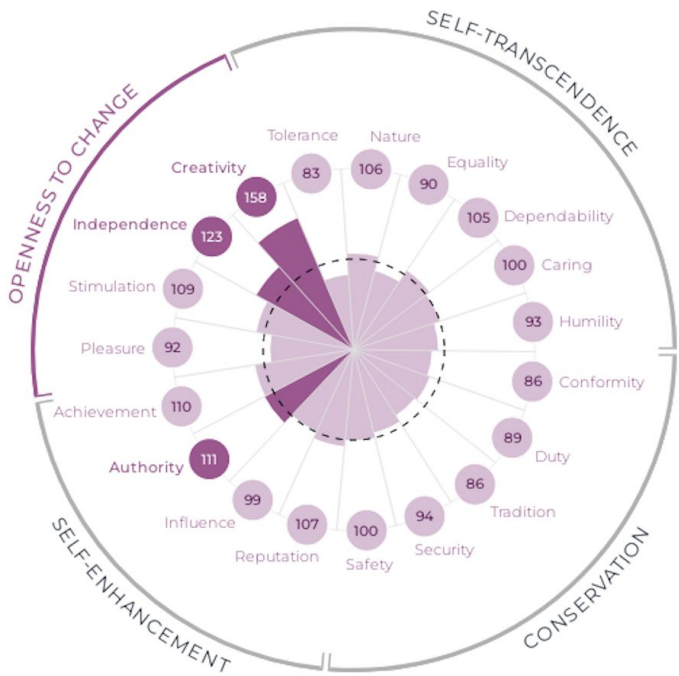
Source: Resonate

Openness to change: May, or may desire to be, open to change an willing to consider novel experiences and fresh ideas. May seek personal growth rather than self-protection and the avoidance of anxiety. May have a personal (self) focus rather than a social (other) focus.

158 - Creativity - Freedom to Be Creative: May be, or may desire to be, more individualistic, adaptive, and imaginative. Life is an exploration and learning about new ideas and being imaginative is important.

123 - Independence - Freedom to Determine Actions: May be, or may desire to be, more self-directed, more self-reliant, and more likely to seek solutions to problems themselves rather than depend on others. Life is a sequence of events that is primarily under their own control.

111 - Authority - Being in Charge and Directing People: May be, or may desire to be, more likely to exercise control, be authoritative, and be seen as influential. May be more likely to be decisive and direct, to take risks to gain rewards, to have high self-confidence, and to be motivated by solving challenging problems. Life is about social power and being in control.

*Numbers indicate indexes relative to online adult population. Numbers over 100 indicate that this group *over*-indexes on a trait. Numbers under 100 indicate that this group *under*-index on a trait.

SMB owners are driven by a **desire for freedom, control and creativity**

Q: What is the origin story of your business?
"I would start to be honest with you. It just started because I didn't want to do my previous job, which was pretty much the same job, but I didn't want to work 100 hours per week any more. I want to spend more time with my family…" (Participant 27)

Q: When did you become a business of more than one?
"It was humbling, especially as a Capricorn, I'm a very much like, one team fits all. And I have, I was very dominant in my positionality. I also was a huge micromanager in my positionality. And so when it came to my job, and so I just kind of carried those skills and tools into when I launched my business." (Participant 7)

SMB owners desire to **provide and advocate for their communities**

Q: What is your role as a business owner in the community?

"In the community, you want to have a good name. And you do that, I think, by treating your employees well and treating your customers well." (White restaurant owner, Participant 25)

Q: What is your role as a business owner in the community?

"In my case, we're a neighborhood restaurant. So if the people from around or us, our community around the restaurant, they don't have the access to you know, money jobs, then they won't be able to support their business then that will give us no growth in the community." (Latinx restaurant owner, Participant 16)

Black + Latinx SMB owners **strive to be leaders** in their communities

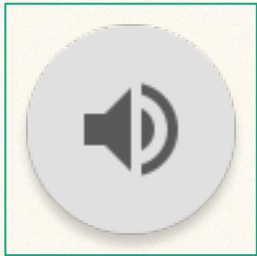## Most cited values:

Autonomy/ freedom/ agency/ income
➔ Startup/entrepreneurship/creativity

Improving status and influence
➔ Respect, recognition

Equality
➔ Being able to give back /provide for community: jobs, services, charity, volunteering

Q: How are businesses born?

"You're a Beyoncé ... connected to folks with with power and all the wealth that you are celebrity, on whatever level." (Participant 8)

Black + Latinx SMB owners' submitted images

Participant 6, *Latinx Care Provider*

Participant 24, *Manufacturing*

Participant 6, *Latinx Care Provider*

Participant 4, *Latinx CDFI*

Black + Latinx owners are **especially motivated by status** in order to lift up their communities
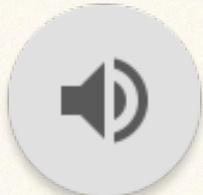
"I think that that reason why employees like working in the industry …. is because we transform lives. You know we have literally transformed families. I have 2 children that are named after me." (Participant 19)
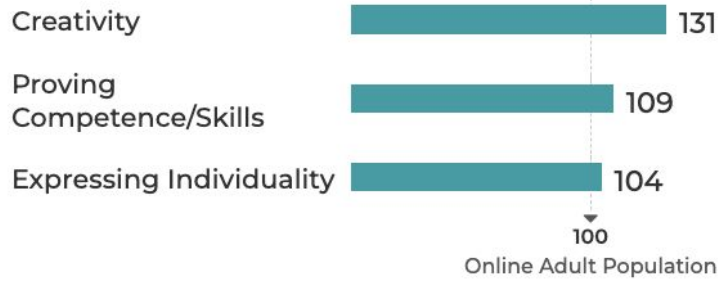
Participant 22

Participant 25

Participant 4

Participant 10

Participant 18

02. **Drivers**

What drives SMB owners' behaviors?

SMB owners' behaviors are driven by a desire to stand out

Top Psychological Drivers

BY INDEX with minimum composition: **10%**

Creativity	131
Proving Competence/Skills	109
Expressing Individuality	104

100
Online Adult Population

131 - Creativity: The desire to exhibit creativity is a top driver of decisions and actions.

109 - Proving competence/skills: The desire to prove competence and skill is a top driver of decisions and actions.

104 - Expressing individuality: The desire to express individuality is a top driver of decisions and actions.

*Numbers indicate indexes relative to online adult population. Numbers over 100 indicate that this group *over*-indexes on a trait. Numbers under 100 indicate that this group *under*-index on a trait.
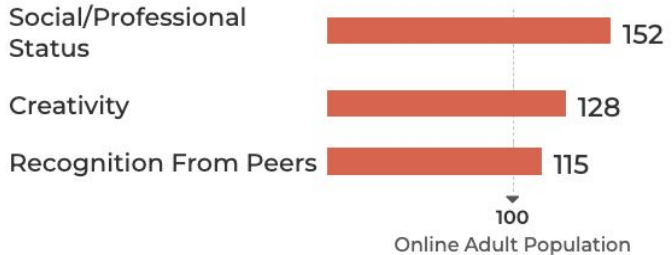
Black, Latinx, and White SMB owners desire to stand out, but **for different reasons**

→ Black + Latinx SMB owners want to be recognized most for their leadership abilities. White SMB owners want to be recognized most for their competence.

→ Black + Latinx SMB owners want to be seen by peers. White SMB owners want to be distinct from peers.

Black + Latinx SMB owners	**White** SMB owners

Top Psychological Drivers
BY INDEX with minimum composition: **10%**

Social/Professional Status	152
Creativity	128
Recognition From Peers	115

100
Online Adult Population

Source: Resonate

Top Psychological Drivers
BY INDEX with minimum composition: **10%**

Creativity	135
Proving Competence/Skills	117
Expressing Individuality	103

100
Online Adult Population

Source: Resonate

Self-directed.. or
just **centered on self?**

When asked **"what motivates employees?"**, many SMB owners answer based on what *they* want.

They opted for lavish gifts and trips that make *them* look good over job quality elements that help employees build wealth or expertise.

SMB owners' submitted images

Participant 22

Participant 10

Participant 23

Participant 17

03. **Behaviors**

What SMB owners actually do
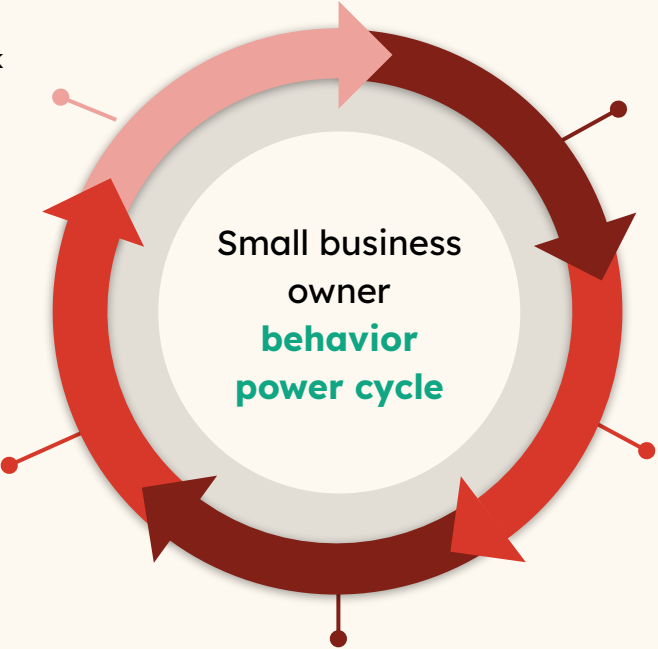
Power loss
Their reactions further perpetuate lack of control over employees. Contributes to fantasies about not being in charge

Power-driven
SMB owners are driven to start businesses because they value power, autonomy and independence

Small business owner behavior power cycle

Power grab
They lament the lack of employee loyalty and assert authority in order to keep employees in line

Power failure
They plan for all aspect of their business except for job quality, failing to see the connection between job quality and hiring/retaining employees

Power tools
They convince themselves that the jobs they offer come with "perks". They justify their lack of JQE planning with narratives that place employee satisfaction out of their control

SMB owners plan for every aspect of their business **except for job quality**

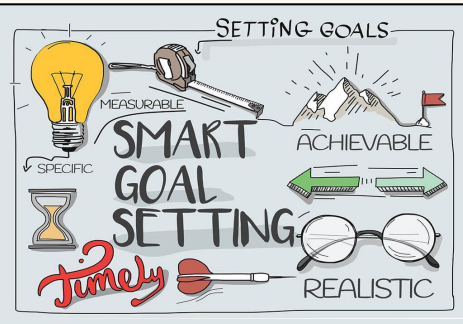| "How are businesses born?"	"What is a good job (for your workers)?"

Participant 3

Participant 6

Participant 4

"Oh, my gosh...that? I feel like, that's a very tough question to answer."

Job Quality Elements:
What SMB owners provide

01. Equity, Respect, and Voice
    a.   SMB owners said they value equity, respect and voice but few demonstrated formal processes or policies for achieving any of these.
    b.   Employees are given little or no opportunities to improve workplace (e.g., through participatory management or collective action).

02. Economic Stability
    a.   SMB owners recognize the importance of good pay but many say that they struggle to pay competitive wages.
    b.   Many struggle to afford health benefits. Most do not offer it.
    c.   SMB owners focus on the "free" or low-cost benefits (e.g., flexible work schedule and time off).
    d.   Retirement was barely mentioned.

03. Economic Mobility
    a.   SMB owners recognize the importance of advancement but provide little formal process to help employees achieve that goal.

Good Jobs: A Working Definition

Economic Stability

- ❑ Stable, family-sustaining pay
- ❑ Sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits
- ❑ Fair, reliable scheduling practices
- ❑ Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions

Economic Mobility

- ❑ Clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways
- ❑ Accessible, paid training and development opportunities
- ❑ Wealth-building opportunities

Equity, Respect & Voice

- ❑ Organizational and management culture, policies, and practices that:
  - ❑ are transparent and enable accountability
  - ❑ support a sense of belonging and purpose
  - ❑ advance DEIA*
  - ❑ and address discrimination.
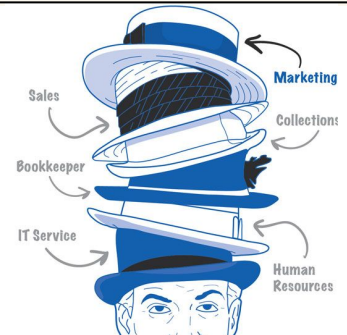- ❑ Ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices

*DEIA: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

Good Jobs

Instead of intentional planning for job quality, SMB owners **"sell"** aspects of the job as perks

Example: "Unpaid months off of work due to seasonal industry is a 'sabbatical'"

Participant 29 (CDFI)	Participant 23	Participant 23	Participant 21	Participant 17
(Marketing Director is the top hat)	*whose employees are on unpaid hiatus from January - March*	*who runs a youth golf tournament*	*who runs a cleaning service*	*who owns a chain of cookie dough restaurants*
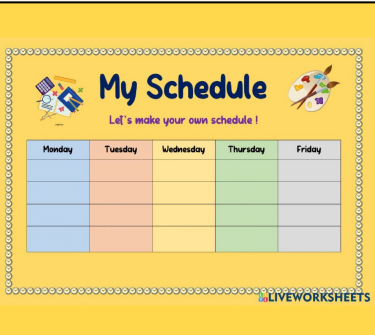
SMB owners desire to **provide and advocate for their communities**

Q: What is your role as a business owner in the community?

"In the community, you want to have a good name. And you do that, I think, by treating your employees well and treating your customers well." (White restaurant owner, Participant 25)

Q: What is your role as a business owner in the community?

"In my case, we're a neighborhood restaurant. So if the people from around or us, our community around the restaurant, they don't have the access to you know, money jobs, then they won't be able to support their business then that will give us no growth in the community." (Latinx restaurant owner, Participant 16)

They **"sell"** the job as a calling or passion, which also limits their responsibility for employee satisfaction

Q: What is a "good job"?

"You have to be passionate about what you're doing. Like when you're doing something that you truly like, I think the work is easier. Not necessarily easier, but it's lighter. I don't know how to explain. But like, for me, the idea of work is, is working in something that I truly like, and I'm passionate about." (Participant 3)

Q: What do employees like about working in your industry?

"This industry, it's like I said, if you don't have the passion, you're not going to understand it. Just because sometimes to work in this industry and to grow. You have to make sacrifices, a lot of sacrifices – and big sometimes." (Participant 16)

SMB owners **rationalize job quality blindness** through narratives that **place employee motivation outside their control**

Employee motivation is a fixed trait, stemming from personality or generational differences.

Q: How do you motivate employees (if money were no object)?

"Maybe it's just lack of whatever it is. Dopamine. You know something that gets them going to to to want something or to want more than what they have." (Participant 24)

"I think the younger generation are lazy. I think technology and the importance of being on technology, if the Instagram and the Twitter and all the other things that come along, I think their world is different than what my world was." (Participant 10)

Another **"externalizing"** narrative is that burnout is an inevitable consequence of their industry

Participant 14

Participant 24

Q: What do people dislike about your industry?

"Clinicians have to deal with every person that they're talking to and their problems on a daily basis. [They're] going home, knowing that this person is suffering, or if there's children—what they're going through… The burden of working in this industry is a lot."

They feel **powerless** to hire and retain employees

"Big thing is money, our industry… there's always another company that wants to pay more that has better benefits, I mean, we're a small business. So that's one of our biggest hardships is always trying to keep people, because there can always be, you know, better benefits or better pay elsewhere."
(Participant 24)

"There's so much mobility in the business that you could give people all this paid time off, and then they screw you in six months, and they leave and you know, so that certainly has happened. So that kind of sucks."
(Participant 20)

Drill Sgt. CEO: They long for control and prize employee qualities that maintain hierarchy

Participant 24

Q: How are businesses actually born?

"…You can see what the military is like, it's, it's a, it's a, it's a well run business basically. Right? Um, and you really do need to be that, that structured and that you have to persevere and you, you have to keep pushing forward." (Participant 18)

Q: What is a good employee?

"I took a picture of the meat loaf album. "I would do anything" that's the name of the song, so like that's my idea of good employee someone that has a lot of skills that's willing to do anything for you, you know. I think that's better than sometimes having a lot of skill." (Participant 24)

Participant 17

Participant 28 (*"What is a good employee?"*)

They see employees as mere instruments of efficiency and productivity

Although SMB owners are low in the values of *duty* and *conformity*, they prize those traits in their employees

- **Most valued characteristics:**
    - Punctuality, dependability, resilience, intelligence, engagement, commitment, show initiative, experience, adaptability, and self efficacy.
    - Trustworthiness, loyalty, formal, communication skills, care free, understanding, and caring.
- **Most loathed characteristics:**
    - Lazy, clueless, only there for the money, who perform poor quality work, uncommitted,
    - Difficult, uncaring, untrustworthy, dishonest, hater, judgey, intimidating, toxic, gossipy, insubordinate, bad work ethic, with problematic lives (addiction)

Participant 17

Participant 25

Participant 28

# SMB owners resent their **employees' autonomy**

Q: What is your image of a bad employee?

"Yeah, they just don't care. They don't care about the work they put out, they don't care what they get here. They don't care about the image of the business. They don't care how it looks to the outside, they don't care how they present themselves on the job site, they just don't care. They just don't care. No, then don't be here. If you just don't care, don't be here, right?" (Participant 25)

Q: What is your role in the community?

"When you're a business owner you're providing for yourself with the reality is, you know, you're really providing for everybody else. And then you get, you know, something else for yourself. So … the woman that's holding the person that's holding the bigger piece of bread is actually, you know, the employees, whereas the other person is the owner. because they're providing so much, and only taking so much for themselves." (Participant 24)
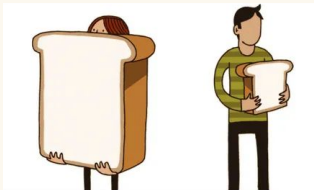
Q: What do your employees dislike about industry?

"At any point they could just quit, you know, like they could just say, hey, I don't want this. I don't like this. I can just quit whenever I want, and so I think that's the the sound that I think of when people are starting to dislike. The industry is just what I quit. I'm not doing it." (Participant 24)
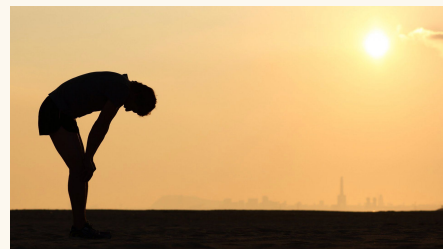
SMB owners **feel burdened** by being in charge

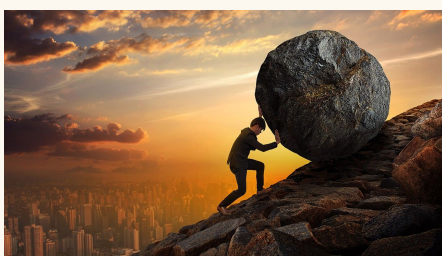

Participant 18
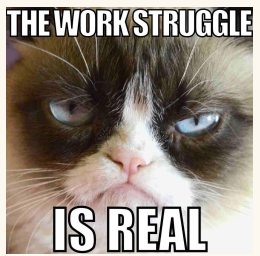

Participant 25

Participant 24

Participant 24

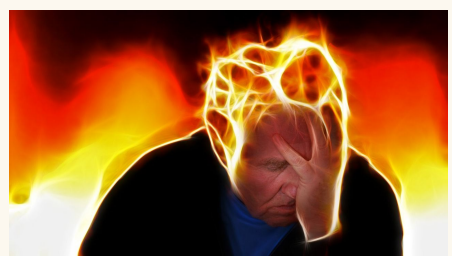Participant 18

Participant 23

Participant 2

Participant 27

An ambivalent relationship with power

SMB owners secretly wish that they could be "saved" by a superhero employee

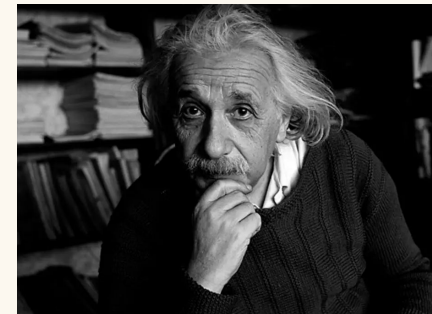Participant 27

Q: What is your image of a good employee?

"[a good employee is] Superman or Superwoman you come you're ready, you're on the case. And you know, as soon as there's a problem, you show up and you're just on the job." (Participant 8)

Participant 4

Participant 8

Participant 28

04. Gender-based Insights

Female SMB owners **share power more often** than their male counterparts

Women talked more about sharing ownership with employees in terms of responsibilities and decision-making power

Q: What do employees like about working in your industry?

"There's nothing that they do that I don't do. There's nothing, I cook, I change diapers, I organize I label, I do lesson plans. I put activities together, the holidays are coming up here, are the ideas, I put the birthdays together. There's no difference." (Participant 6)

Q: What is a good job?

"I think a big part of that is for the employee to have buy in, for them to really care about what they're doing. And, you know, one way that we do that, is we ask them their opinion, you know, do you think do you think this could be done in a better way?" (Participant 21)

Female SMB owners also have to *assert* their power

This may be due to employees' gender stereotypes or differences in leadership style:
A flat structure embraced by women can create blurred lines of authority. In addition, employees may automatically recognize the authority of male owners.

Q: What do employees like about working in your industry?

"My colleagues, as I call them, not staff do not feel like I'm superior to them. Ever. And the only time that my ex employees probably felt like that, was the moment that they became too comfortable with me being complicit in allowing them to overstep when it came to me being their boss. ...And now that they're not here, and they haven't been able to find a job, I think that they probably are self reflecting now." (Participant 6)

Q: What is your image of a bad employee?

"Okay, so I'm the boss. Period, there's no nothing comes after that. I am the boss period. That's the sentence.... I'm all for open dialogue. But what you're not going to do under any circumstances is not do it." (Participant 17)

05. Industry-specific Insights

SMB owners in care industries, like early education, especially struggle to hire and retain employees

Q: What's your role in the community?

"Yeah, with childcare. I mean, it's [difficult to hire staff] ....definitely since COVID. ... people don't want to be in child care anymore or the rate of pay. And I feel like I've always been above whatever the minimum standard is, I'm always two or $3. Above that, give, you know, bonus caregivers days off, that's paid sick time pay that as a small business owner when I first started, ...there was things I could not afford." *(Participant 10)*

Q: What do people dislike about your industry?

"I think educators in this day and age feel, feel overwhelmed with the work, that there are a lot of things that they have to manage, and a lot of things that are coming at them all at once. Oftentimes, they don't feel like that their work is respected from a monetary point of view."
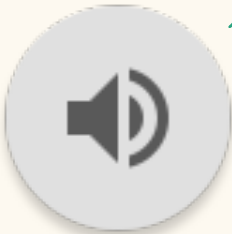
Manufacturing owners face the physical burdens of the job

Q: How are businesses actually born?

"It's hard work. It's just hard work. It's just hard work. Just get dirty. I mean, in our, in our business, you get physically dirty. But you also get emotionally and psychologically, like it's just a lot of work. It's just a lot of work." (Participant 25)

Q: short story

"It's like any more difficult job, you know, starts to take a toll on your body, and you eventually start to question that." (Participant 24)

06. CDFI Insights

CDFIs understand the importance of job quality, but don't treat it as a core part of their training

CDFIs do not include hiring and retaining employees as part of their core business advising

Q: what do you tell them about like management and hiring and training?

A: "*We start with start with the module that is called Design your idea, which is kind of okay, I'm going to decide to do healthy empanadas. And then we started studying your competition, your competitors, your market, your audience and all that, and then how to get your clients. Module three is how you price your product and how you get funds. And the fourth one is marketing to launch your business.*"
(Participant 3)

CDFIs see SMB owners as conflicted between the desire and ability to provide job quality

CDFIs perceive that SMB owners overpromise and under-deliver on job quality

"They want to have good employees, they offer more than they can give. ….and then you have this employee waiting for you. So okay, so when you're going to give me the increase that you told me that you were going to give me." (Participant 29)

"He told her well, as soon as we start getting profit, so I'm going to share X percentage, And I just say, Do you know, when are you going to start having profits? No. So you can offer that to her? Because she's gonna have you know, he's gonna pass month 1, 2, 3 And then you don't have anything to share with her... she's going to quit." (Participant 29)
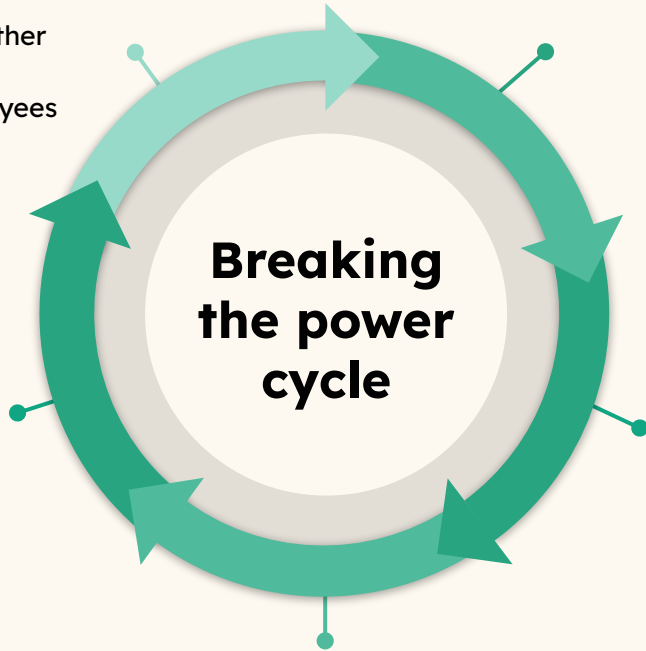
07. Key Insights

Insight: Highlight how JQE maintains their position: at the top and in control

Power loss
Their reactions further perpetuate lack of control over employees

Power-driven
SMB owners start businesses because they value power, autonomy and independence

Insight: Maintain sense of autonomy when advising on JQE. Idea must come from them

Breaking the power cycle

Power failure
They plan for all aspect of their business except for job quality, failing to see the connection between job quality and hiring/retaining employees

Insight: Remind SMB owners that JQE is *worth* planning for/is core to business

Power grab
They lament the lack of employee loyalty and aspire to keep employees in line

Insight: draw connection between JQE, loyalty and good customer service

Power tools
They convince themselves that the jobs they offer come with "perks". They justify their lack of JQE planning with narratives that place employee satisfaction out of their control

Insight: draw connection between JQE and control over employees. Point out incongruity

Summary of Insights

- **SMB owners are struggling**
    - SMB owners wish to be saved by a superhero employee
    - SMB owners struggle with their bottom lines

- **SMB owners value freedom, social power, social status and money**
    - Black + Latinx SMB owners are especially motivated by social status
    - Black + Latinx SMB owners desire to use their status to advocate for their communities
    - White SMB owners also care about their communities but they tend to define their communities more in terms of geography (i.e., the people that live in their local community)
    - All SMB owners are driven by a desire to apply their unique and creative perspective to a problem they care about
    - All SMB owners want to lead but *who* they want to lead differs across audiences

- **SMB owners' values are incongruent with their actions**
    - They value social control but do not take control when it comes to their employees
    - SMB owners plan for every aspect of their business except for job quality
    They feel empowered to start a business but see themselves as powerless over employees

- **Subgroup insights**
    - CDFIs recognize the importance of job quality but do not include job quality as part of their core business trainings
    - Female SMB owners embrace a flat structure. Male SMB owners did not mention this type of leadership style
    - Child care owners face unique financial challenges. Manufacturing owners may lose employees due to physical burdens of the job

Recommendations

- **Remind SMB owners that job quality is key to success**
  - will make their business more money
  - is something their customers want (customers rewards businesses that treat employees well)
  - is an issue that SMB owners experience themselves
  - can drive employee loyalty and employee commitment to great service
  - will help them empower their communities

- **For Black + Latinx SMB owners**
  - Job quality must be a ***status symbol*** - something they can flaunt (e.g., through a public award ceremony, a badge they can put on their website)

- Narratives must preserve their sense of autonomy - they must come to their *own* conclusion that job quality is necessary

- Therefore, the messenger must be an SMB owner

Policy Recommendations

- **Marketing Funding:** Tie SMB owners' capital needs for marketing to capital incentives
  - SMB owners desire funds for marketing
  - Loans or grants for marketing should be tied to demonstrated production of quality jobs

- **Awards and Recognition:** SMB owners value virtue and status signaling
  - Best place to work awards and recognition would drive pro-job quality behaviors

- **Money Matters:** CDFIs, business associations, and capital granting organizations like banks should tie assistance requirements to job quality plans

"So, for example, the 3 important things in business to to me in terms of what's revenue impacting is marketing, marketing, marketing. But that cost money. Okay? And finally I had money for it." (Participant 19)

04. **Audiences**

Audiences

- **The Bad and Bougies**
  - Aspire to be exemplars in their communities
  - "Job quality will increase your influence, visibility and status in your community"
- **The Mister Rights**
  - Libertarian tendencies, authoritarian
  - "Job quality is an investment"
  - Message: "To advocate for local issues, first take care of your employees"
- **Disempowered Despots**
  - Don't see the connection between their actions and lack of control over employees.
  - Power over their businesses, but no power over their employees
  - Time and energy spent toward every aspect of their business. But no desire to pay attention to their number one expense: labor
  - They want their employees to be robots.
  - See themselves as victims – helpless to hire and retain good people
- **Misguided Misfits**
  - They mean well but don't do well
  - They desire to do well by their employees but don't understand that they're off track
  - They think the job is a benefit and that benefits are perks.
  - They prioritize the things that cost the least: recognition, time off, pizza parties
- **The Do Rights**
  - They provide quality jobs
  - They are highly empathetic and understand how job quality benefits their business
- **The Almost Do Rights**
  - Planning for employees advancement, but not paying for it

Aspen Institute JQE

Message Test Analysis

July 28, 2023
Prepared for The Aspen Institute

N = 1,267

Field dates:
June 26 to July 10, 2023

01. **Process + Objectives**

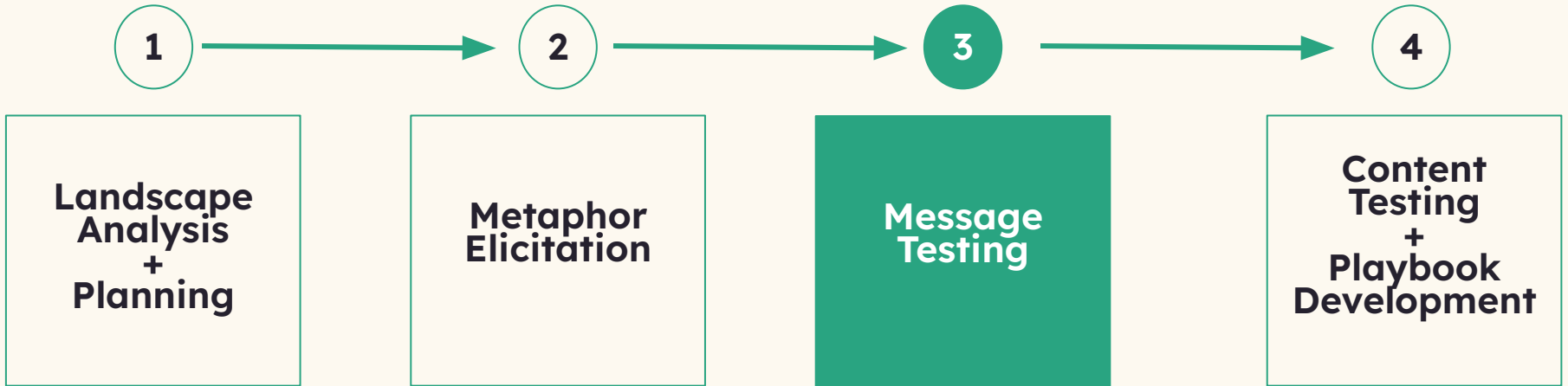02. **Methodology**

03. **Message Creation**

04. **Results**

05. **Main Takeaways**

06. **Appendix**

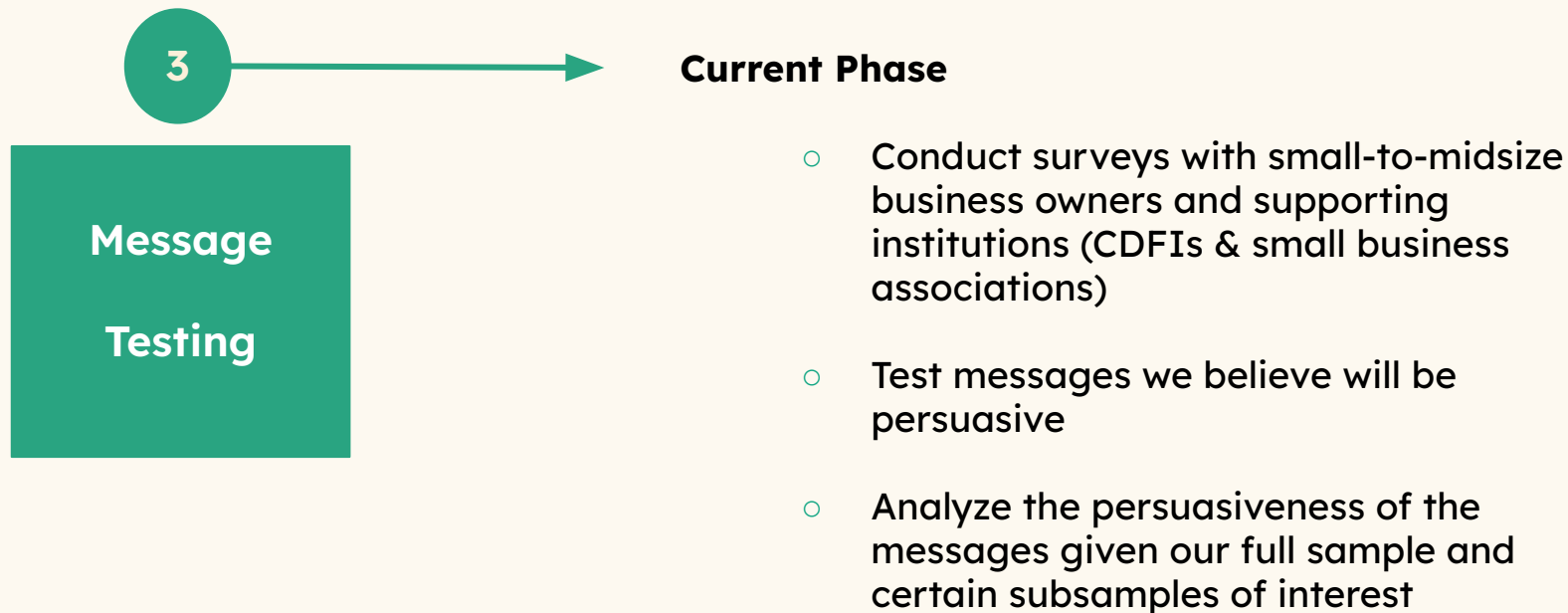# 01. **Process + Objectives**

Project framework & checkpoints

Narrative Lab Process

1	2	3	4
Landscape Analysis + Planning	**Metaphor Elicitation**	**Message Testing**	**Content Testing + Playbook Development**

Job Quality Narrative Lab Process

3

Current Phase

Message

Testing

○ Conduct surveys with small-to-midsize business owners and supporting institutions (CDFIs & small business associations)

○ Test messages we believe will be persuasive

○ Analyze the persuasiveness of the messages given our full sample and certain subsamples of interest
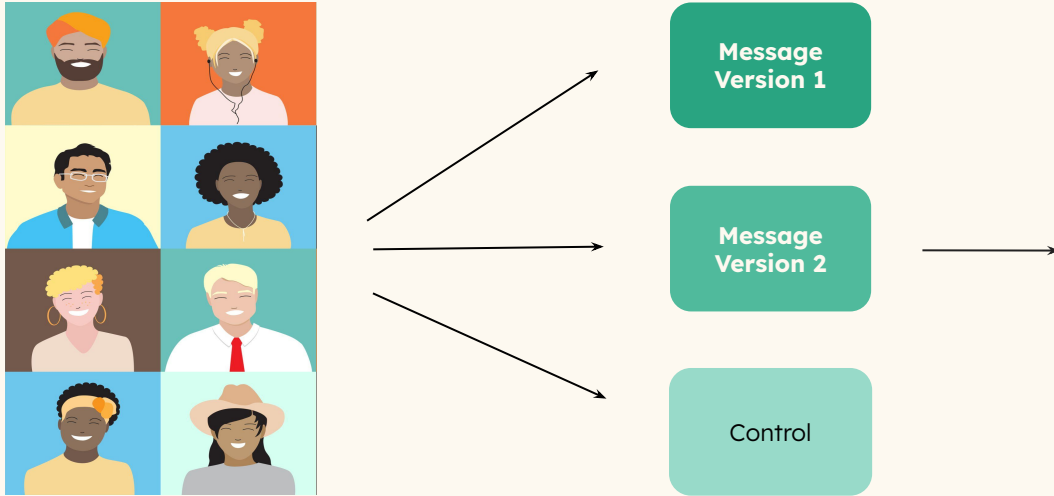
02. **Methodology**

Experimental Design

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS - CONTENT AND MESSAGE TESTING

How Persuasion Message Testing Works

Message Version 1

Message Version 2

Control

Likelihood to support our issue

We use validated survey panels to recruit a sample of convenience representing the people that you want to persuade.

We randomly assign respondents into groups. These groups are pretty identical to ensure that no bias is introduced. Each group views either test creative or control creative.
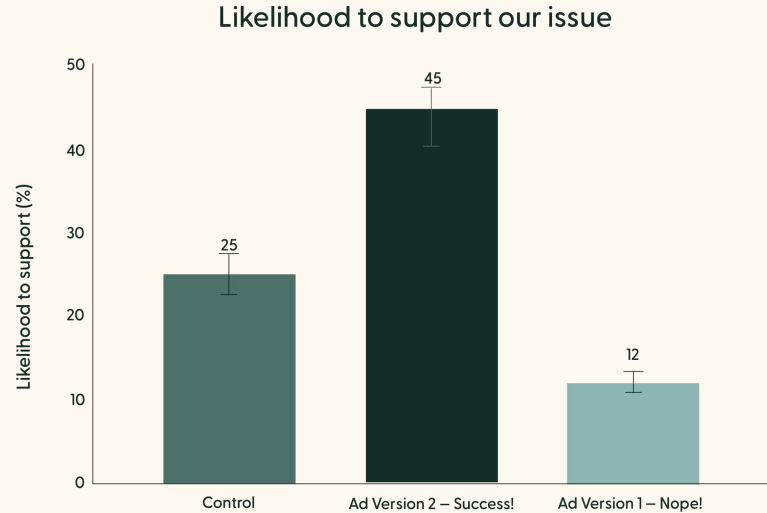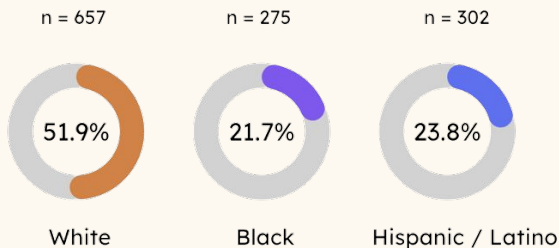
When we compare the differences in values, beliefs, opinions between those who saw test creative vs. control.
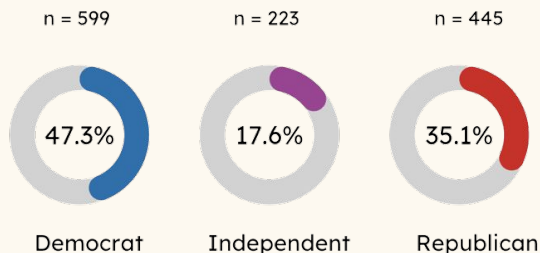
About the Message Test Participants

Full sample (N) was 1267 small-to-medium business owners aged 18 and over with the following characteristics:

01. Race/Ethnicity:

n = 657   n = 275   n = 302

51.9%   21.7%   23.8%

White   Black   Hispanic / Latino

05. Political Party Membership:

n = 599   n = 223   n = 445

47.3%   17.6%   35.1%

Democrat   Independent   Republican

02. Gender Identity:

664 (52.4%) Female
598 (47.2%) Male
5 (.4%) Neither Male nor Female

03. Age:

54.6% of respondents were **between 30 and 49 years old**

04. College Education:

42.4% of respondents **possess a Bachelor's degree or higher (n=537)**

06. Business Size:

873 (68.9%) small business owners with 1 to 10 employees
394 (31.1%) medium business owners with 10 to 50 employees

07. Industry:

189 Retail
182 Construction
106 Professional Services
102 Arts & Recreation
92 Wholesale
84 Manufacturing
66 Health & Social Services
65 Real Estate & Leasing
64 Finance & Insurance
63 Transport & Warehousing

03. Message Creation

How previous work influenced our messages

Good Job Quality Elements

1. **Equity, Respect, and Voice**
   - Employee satisfaction

2. **Economic Stability**
   - Compensation
   - Benefits

3. **Economic Mobility**
   - Incentives
   - Professional growth
   - Wealth-building

Good Jobs: A Working Definition

Economic Stability

- ❑ Stable, family-sustaining pay
- ❑ Sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits
- ❑ Fair, reliable scheduling practices
- ❑ Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions

Economic Mobility

- ❑ Clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways
- ❑ Accessible, paid training and development opportunities
- ❑ Wealth-building opportunities

Equity, Respect & Voice

- ❑ Organizational and management culture, policies, and practices that:
  - ❑ are transparent and enable accountability
  - ❑ support a sense of belonging and purpose
  - ❑ advance DEIA*
  - ❑ and address discrimination.
- ❑ Ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices

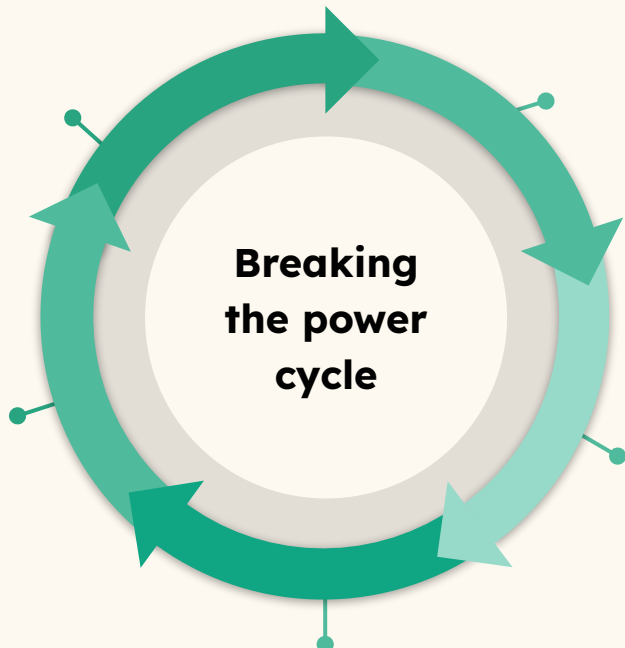*DEIA: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

Good Jobs

Metaphor Elicitation Insights

Insight: Highlight how JQE maintains their position at the top and in control

Power loss
Their reactions further perpetuate lack of control over employees

Power-driven
Small-to-medium sized business owners start businesses because they value power, autonomy and independence

Insight: Maintain sense of autonomy when advising on JQE. Idea must come from them

Breaking the power cycle

Power grab
They lament the lack of employee loyalty and aspire to keep employees in line

Insight: Draw connection between JQE, loyalty and good customer service

Power failure
They plan for all aspect of their business except for job quality, failing to see the connection between job quality and hiring/retaining employees

Insight: Remind small-to-midsize business owners that JQE is *worth* planning for/is core to business

Power tools
They convince themselves that the jobs they offer come with 'perks'. They justify their lack of JQE planning with narratives that place employee satisfaction out of their control

Insight: Draw connection between JQE and control over employees, point out incongruity

The Messages

Accomplishments

— Appeals to **the drive to achieve**, rise above the competition

Bottom Line

— Appeals to **financial concerns**, the economic case for JQE

Community Status

— Appeals to **the desire for recognition**, to be **the "best on the block"**

Congruence

— Appeals to **the desire to live out one's values**, to "walk the walk"

Micromanaging

— Appeals to **the desire for control** and **a business that runs like a well-oiled machine**

Participants were randomly assigned to listen to one of the five messages or to a control condition on an unrelated topic.

Measurement: Job Quality Pillars

- **Support**: How important are the following *to your business/to your employees*? To what extent is it *your responsibility as an employer* to provide the following?

    - **Stability**:
        - "Paying your employees enough for them to support a family"
        - "Providing quality healthcare benefits to your employees"
        - "Offering consistent, reliable scheduling"

    - **Mobility**:
        - "Providing employees with opportunities for promotion and raises"
        - "Offering free professional development to your employees"

    - **Equity, Respect, and Voice**:
        - "Employees feeling a sense of belonging and purpose at work"
        - "Creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment"
        - "Giving employees the power to make improvements to the workplace"

- **Business Value***: Providing employees with **economic stability / economic mobility / equity, respect, and voice** is (1 = Not at all important, 5 = Extremely important) to my business.

- **Efficacy to Provide***: As an employer, it is within my power to provide my employees with **economic stability / economic mobility / equity, respect, and voice** (1 = Strongly Disagree, 6 = Strongly Agree).

* Respondents viewed the JQE diagram while answering these questions.

Measurement: Other Outcomes

- **Perceived Value of Job Quality**: Improving the quality of my employees' jobs will:
  - Give me more control over my business (1 = Strongly Disagree, 6 = Strongly Agree)
  - Increase my status in the community
  - Improve the products and services my business
  - Help my bottom line
  - Help my community

- **Willingness to Support Employees Financially**: You're given a loan of 10k to grow your business. How much do you budget for each of the following aspects of your business?
  - **Supporting existing employees (e.g., salary, benefits, formal training programs)**
  - Marketing
  - Upgrade or purchase new equipment, infrastructure or technology
  - Your own compensation

- **Positive Emotions**: To what extent did the message you just listened to make you feel **hopeful / energized / empowered / happy** (1 = Not at all, 5 = Extremely)?

- **Shareability**: How likely would you be to share the message you just heard with your friends and family (1 = Very Unlikely, 5 = Very Likely)?

- **Identification with Speaker**: The speaker is just like me (1 = Strongly Disagree, 6 = Strongly Agree).

04. **Results**

Key Findings

Toplines 1 and 2: *"Micromanaging" and "Community Status" were the most effective messages*

"Micromanaging" was particularly effective among Republican and White small-to-medium sized business owners. It also increased positive emotions across the board.

"Community Status" was the only message to increase willingness to spend on behalf of employees.

Topline 3: **"Accomplishments" was the most effective among Black and Democratic small-to-midsize sized business owners.**

It drove support for specific job quality initiatives and for belief in job quality being good for business.

Topline 4: **"Bottom Line" fell flat across the board.**

Simply highlighting economic benefits of JQE doesn't move the needle (and often backfires).

Recommendations

Good Jobs = Tight Ship

Sell JQE as a means of improving operations and regaining control.

Use imagery and language connoting smooth operations and fine-tuned systems.

Achieving Mainstay Status

Show small and medium sized business owners the path from better jobs to a better reputation and deeper ties to the community.

Small-to-midsize business owners value their roles as positive forces in the community but need to be shown how their role as an employer fits in to that.

Appeal to Democratic and Black Small-to-Midsize Business Owners' 5-Star Ambitions

Emphasize to these audiences that true excellence requires excellent job quality.

Businesses that make a name for themselves have great employees, and great employees are the result of good jobs.

Move Beyond the Balance Sheet

The straightforward financial case for improving job quality is not sufficient and may pull small and medium sized business owners' focus away from workforce issues.

Successful Message Elements:	
✓	**Increased Support for Specific Job Quality Elements**
✓	**Increased Value of Job Quality to the Business**
✓	**Increased Efficacy to Provide JQE to Employees**
✓	**Increased Perceived Value of Job Quality to Business Owner**
❏	**Increased Willingness to Support Employees Financially**
✓	**Promoted Positive Emotions**
✓	**Shareability**
❏	**Identification with Speaker**

Topline 1

"Micromanaging" was a top performer

"Micromanaging" promoted positive emotions on the full sample

- The "Micromanaging" treatment increased positive emotions.

- Similar to our metaphor elicitation, we find that business owners feel good when they are in control.

- Respondents who felt more positive also reported greater support of JQE.

Positive Emotions

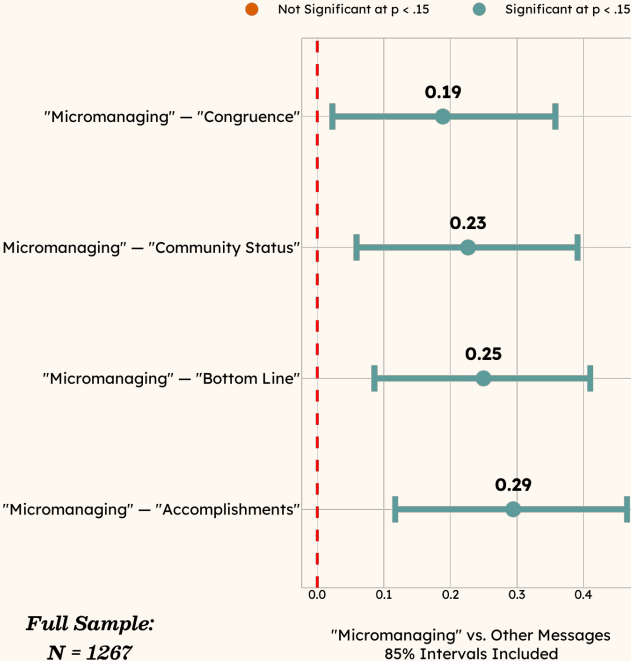● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

"Micromanaging" — "Congruence"   0.14

"Micromanaging" — "Community Status"   0.17

"Micromanaging" — "Bottom Line"   0.21

"Micromanaging" — "Accomplishments"   0.14

0.0   0.1   0.2   0.3
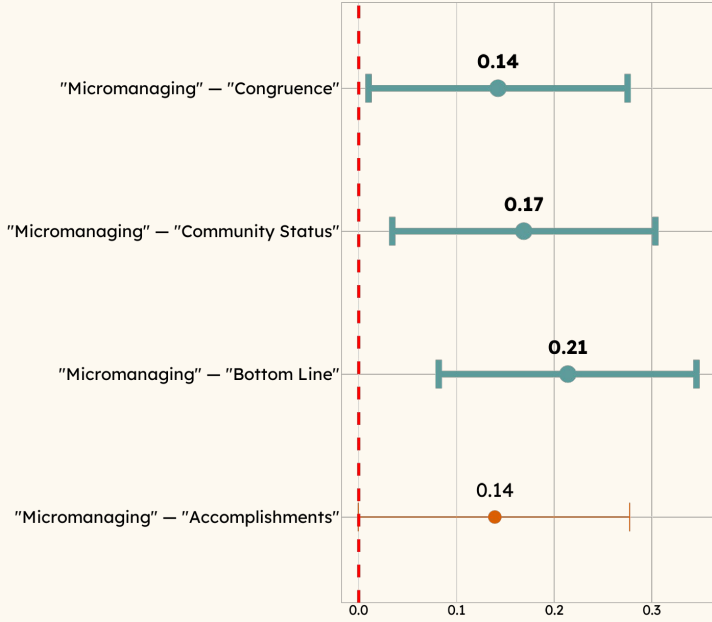
Full Sample:
N = 1267

"Micromanaging" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included

Respondents in the full sample would share "Micromanaging" over other messages

- Business owners were most willing to share the "Micromanaging" message with their friends and family.

How likely are you to share with friends and family?

● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

"Micromanaging" — "Congruence"   **0.19**

Micromanaging" — "Community Status"   **0.23**

"Micromanaging" — "Bottom Line"   **0.25**

"Micromanaging" — "Accomplishments"   **0.29**

"Micromanaging" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included

Full Sample:
N = 1267

"Micromanaging" was particularly effective among White and Republican small and medium sized business owners

- White respondents were especially willing to share the "Micromanaging" message with their friends and family (see right).

- Among Republicans, "Micromanaging" increased several measures of JQE support, including the belief that it is good for business.
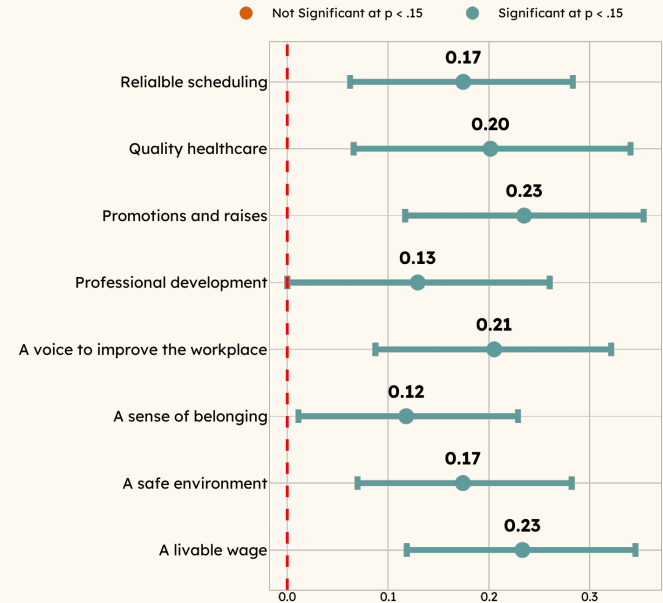
How likely are you to share with friends and family?

White respondents: N = 657

Treatment Differences
85% Intervals Included
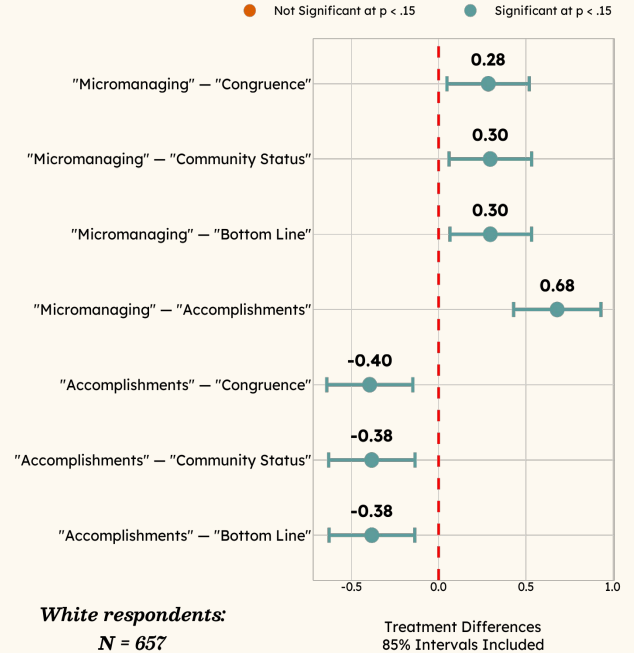
"Micromanaging" promotes support of a wide range of JQE actions

- "Micromanaging" also promoted the belief that JQE was good for business, and it promoted business owner efficacy in adopting JQE.

- As we'll see, "Micromanaging" does not suffer from some shortcomings of other messages. No audiences reacted negatively to it.

How important are the following to the success of your business? Providing employees with...

- Not Significant at p < .15
- Significant at p < .15

Relialble scheduling	0.17
Quality healthcare	0.20
Promotions and raises	0.23
Professional development	0.13
A voice to improve the workplace	0.21
A sense of belonging	0.12
A safe environment	0.17
A livable wage	0.23

Full Sample:
N = 1267

"Micromanaging" vs. Control
85% Intervals Included

"Micromanaging" is most likely to evoke a sense of small and medium sized business owner identity

- Small and medium sized business owners who listened to the "Micromanaging" message emphasize the importance of employee investments. Specifically, these business owners are among those most likely to cite the need to "provide quality jobs & compensation."

- In addition, business owner identity is the second most cited theme, including mentions of responsible planning and dedication.

In your opinion, what was the most important part of the message you just heard?

	Micromanaging
Importance of making employee investments	46%
Provide quality jobs & compensation	19%
Hiring / getting the right people	14%
Take care of employees & working environment	12%
Investing in your employees	3%
Work as a team	2%
Business owner identity	27%
Owners have to be responsible planners	10%
Being an owner is hard work, takes dedication	9%
Owners never clock out & are the business	7%
Importance of making business investments	2%
Focus on customer needs	2%

*responses can be coded under multiple codes, so percentages may not add up.

"The most important part was about the responsibility business owners have to provide good employment to others."

Topline 1: Summary

"Micromanaging" was the most effective message overall.

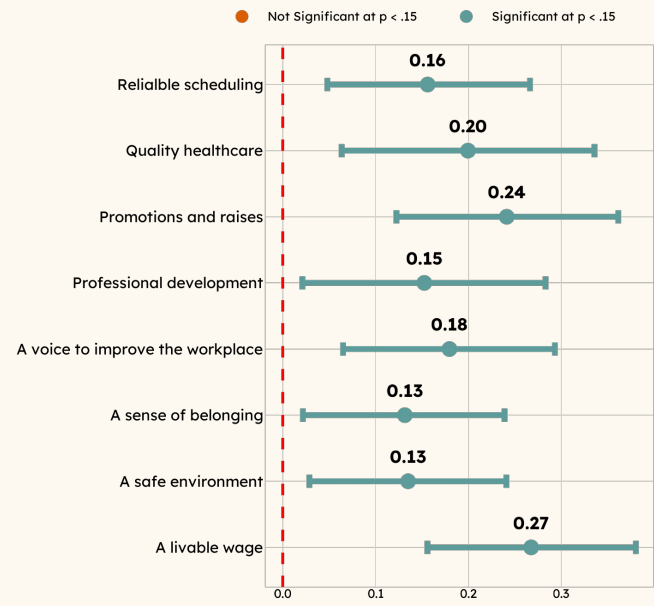|		
The "Micromanaging" message promotes positive emotions.	**It made respondents want to share it (especially White respondents).**	**The message drove support for JQE across the board.** "Micromanaging" increased belief that JQE is good for business. It also instilled confidence in the ability to provide JQE and did not have any negative effects (i.e., backlash).

Successful Message Elements:	
✓	**Increased Support for Specific Job Quality Elements**
✓	**Increased Value of Job Quality to the Business**
✓	**Increased Efficacy to Provide JQE to Employees**
✓	**Increased Perceived Value of Job Quality to Business Owner**
✓	**Increased Willingness to Support Employees Financially**
❏	**Promoted Positive Emotions**
❏	**Shareability**
❏	**Identification with Speaker**

Topline 2

"Community Status" was also highly effective

"Community Status" increased support for all Job Quality Elements among the full sample

- "Community Status" drove support for many aspects of JQE.

- It also increased belief in JQE being good for business and perceived self-efficacy to provide JQE.

- However, unlike "Micromanaging," "Community Status" did not promote positive emotions* or intention to share.

How important are the following to the success of your business? Providing employees with...

Legend: ● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

Chart values:
- Relialble scheduling: 0.16
- Quality healthcare: 0.20
- Promotions and raises: 0.24
- Professional development: 0.15
- A voice to improve the workplace: 0.18
- A sense of belonging: 0.13
- A safe environment: 0.13
- A livable wage: 0.27

Full Sample:
N = 1267

"Community Status" vs. Control
85% Intervals Included

"Community Status" was the only message to increase financial support for employees in the full sample

- "Community Status" persuaded business owners to invest in their staff.

- On average, those who listened to this message allocated $400 more to employees.

If given a 10k loan, how much would you spend on supporting existing employees?

Full Sample:
N = 1267
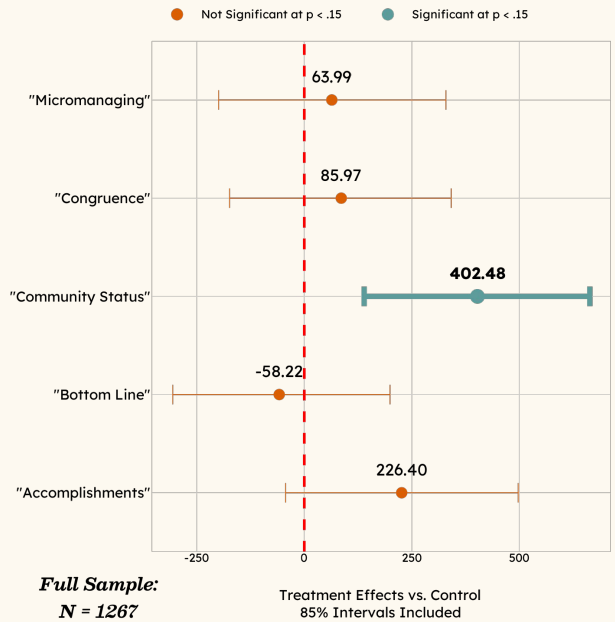
In particular, "Community Status" increased Democrats' financial support to employees

- Democratic business owners allocated on average over $600 more to their employees if they listened to "Community Status" (vs. Control).

If given a 10k loan, how much would you spend on supporting existing employees?

● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

	Democrats N = 599	Independents N = 223	Republicans N = 445
"Micromanaging"	176.22	-229.24	21.96
"Congruence"	41.31	-160.18	148.72
"Community Status"	**618.23**	16.23	320.90
"Bottom Line"	7.55	-147.08	-157.74
"Accomplishments"	**470.59**	277.96	-293.22

Treatment Effects vs. Control
85% Intervals Included
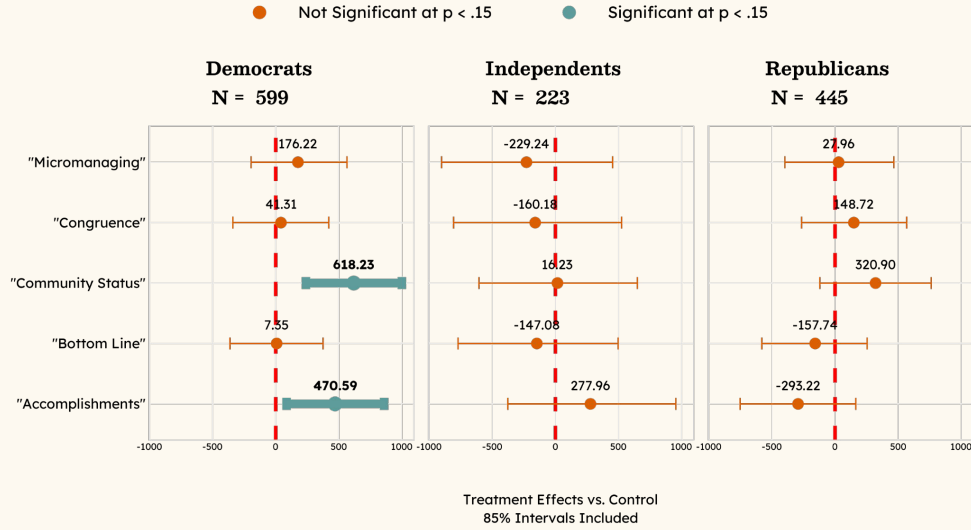
Small and medium sized business owners emphasize employee and community relations in "Community Status"

- Small and medium sized business owners who listened to the "Community Status" message emphasize community impact through their employees in addition to employee investment.

- Many reference that good employment leads to good communities.

In your opinion, what was the most important part of the message you just heard?

	Community Status
Importance of making employee investments	34%
Provide quality jobs & compensation	11%
Investing in your employees	9%
Take care of employees & working environment	8%
Hiring / getting the right people	6%
Work as a team	2%
Community impact	25%
Maintain employee, and community relations	16%
Community building	9%
Business owner identity	10%
Owners have to be responsible planners	5%
Owners never clock out & are the business	3%
Being an owner is hard work, takes dedication	2%

*responses can be coded under multiple codes, so percentages may not add up.

"Good business produces good jobs which lead to good community."

Topline 2: Summary

"Community Status" was also an effective message overall.

The "Community Status" message increased support for a wide range of Job Quality Elements.

It was the only message to persuade business owners to spend more on supporting their employees.

This effect was largest among Democrats.

"Community Status" was not as emotive nor as shareworthy as "Micromanaging."

Successful Message Elements:	
✓	**Increased Support for Specific Job Quality Elements**
❏	**Increased Value of Job Quality to the Business**
❏	**Increased Efficacy to Provide JQE to Employees**
✓	**Increased Perceived Value of Job Quality to Business Owner**
✓	**Increased Willingness to Support Employees Financially**
❏	**Promoted Positive Emotions**
❏	**Shareability**
❏	**Identification with Speaker**

Topline 3

"Accomplishments" was the most effective message among Black and Democratic small-to-midsize business owners

If we focus on Democrats, "Accomplishments" had the largest increases on support for Job Quality Elements

- While not as persuasive to the full sample, the "Accomplishments" message was the most impactful among Democratic business owners.

How important are the following to the success of your business? Providing employees with...

● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15
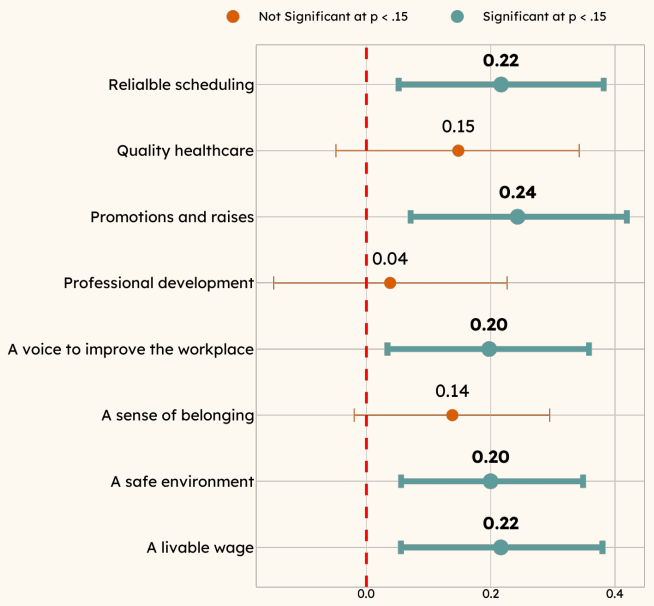
Democrat respondents:
N = 599

"Accomplishments" vs. Control
85% Intervals Included

"Accomplishments" also promotes financial support of employees among Democrats

- Democratic business owners allocated on average $470 more to their employees if they listened to "Accomplishments" (vs. Control).

If given a 10k loan, how much would you spend on supporting existing employees?

● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

Treatment Effects vs. Control
85% Intervals Included
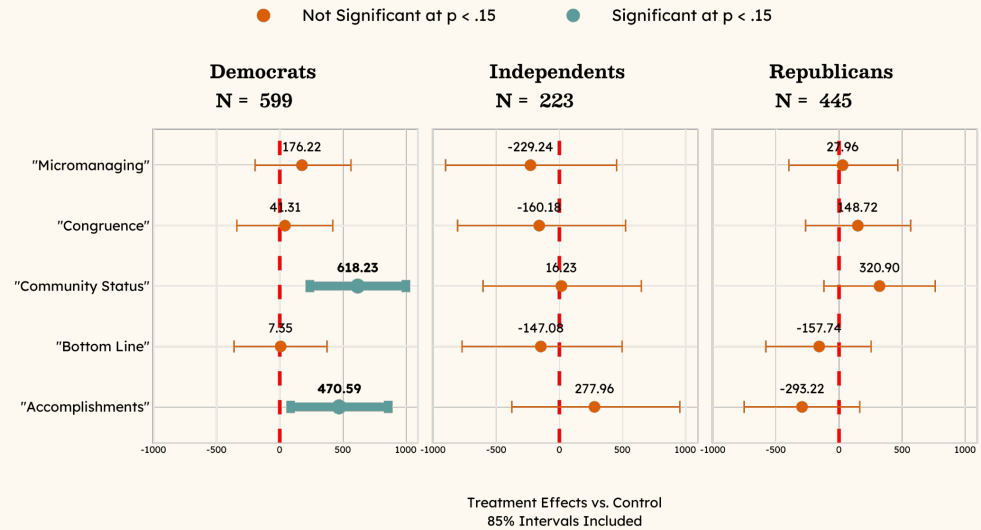
"Accomplishments" was the most effective message among Black respondents

- "Accomplishments" persuaded Black business owners of the value of a broad range of JQE aspects.

How important are the following to the success of your business? Providing employees with…

Black respondents:
N = 275

"Accomplishments" vs. Control
85% Intervals Included
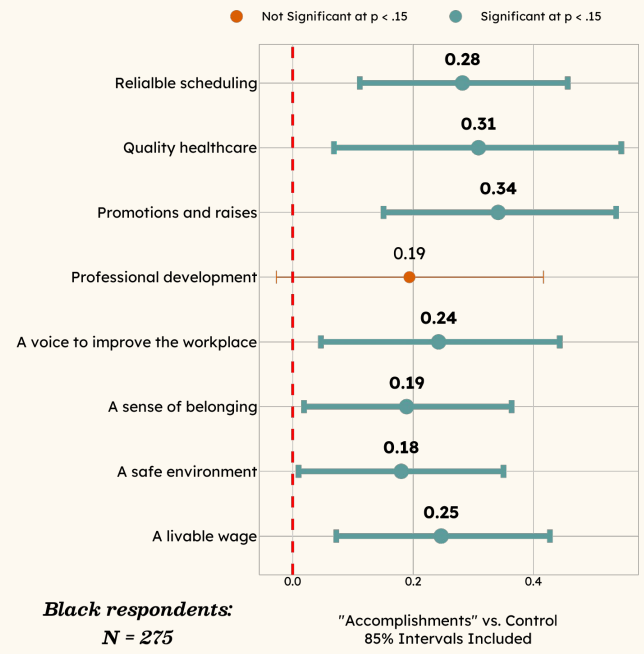
As a whole, respondents do not identify with the "Accomplishments" message

- While the "Accomplishments" message was effective with Black and Democratic business owners, the full sample identified more with other messages.

- White and Republican respondents also seemed to not identify with or want to share the "Accomplishments" message.

Identification with Speaker

● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

"Accomplishments" — "Micromanaging"   **-0.21**

"Accomplishments" — "Congruence"   **-0.21**

"Accomplishments" — "Community Status"   -0.08

"Accomplishments" — "Bottom Line"   -0.17

Full Sample:
N = 1267

"Accomplishments" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included
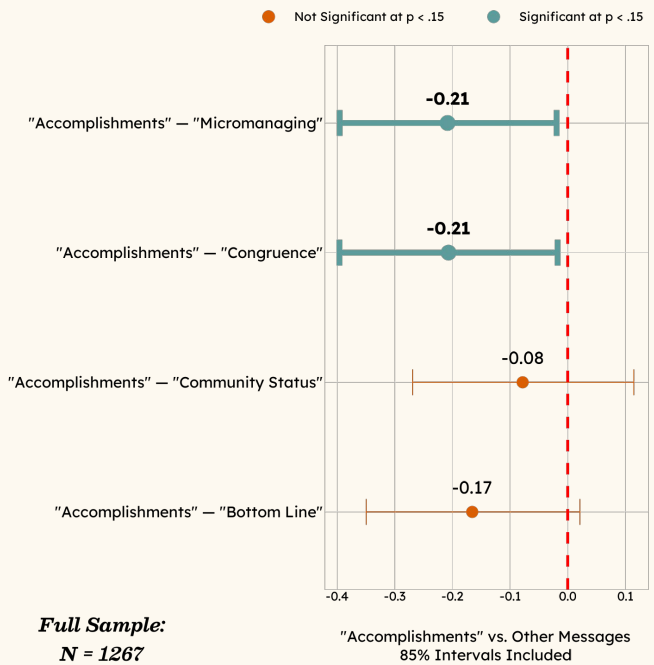
Topline 3: Summary

"Accomplishments" was the most effective message among Black and Democratic respondents.

Among these groups, it increased the favorability of JQE elements across the board.

The "Accomplishments" message increased the probability of small and medium sized business owners allocating money to support employees among Democrats.

However, the overall sample did not identify with this message.

White and Republican respondents particularly did not identify with it, and they were less likely to share this message.

Successful Message Elements:	
❏	Increased Support for Specific Job Quality Elements
❏	Increased Value of Job Quality to the Business
❏	Increased Efficacy to Provide JQE to Employees
❏	Increased Perceived Value of Job Quality to Business Owner
❏	Increased Willingness to Support Employees Financially
❏	Promoted Positive Emotions
❏	Shareability
❏	Identification with Speaker

Topline 4

"Bottom Line" fell flat across the board

"Bottom Line" was not persuasive

- "Bottom Line" failed to increase business owners' belief that JQE would help their businesses.

Perceived Value of Job Quality

● Not Significant at p < .15 ● Significant at p < .15

Job quality strengthens the community — 0.06

Job quality strengthens the bottom line — 0.05

Job quality improves products — -0.08

Job quality gives control over business — 0.13

Job quality enhances one's status — 0.08

-0.2 -0.1 0.0 0.1 0.2 0.3

Agreement
85% Intervals Included

Full Sample:
N = 1267
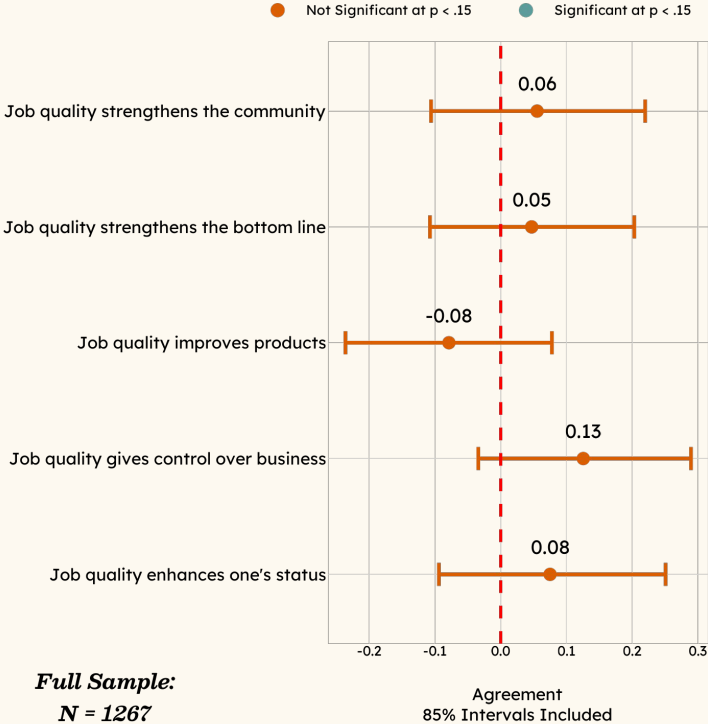
Hispanic/Latino SMB owners would share other messages before "Bottom Line"

- "Bottom Line" backfired among Hispanic/Latino business owners, who were less likely to share this message relative to most other messages.

How likely are you to share with friends and family?

● Not Significant at p < .15   ● Significant at p < .15

Hispanic/Latino respondents:

N = 302

Treatment Differences
85% Intervals Included
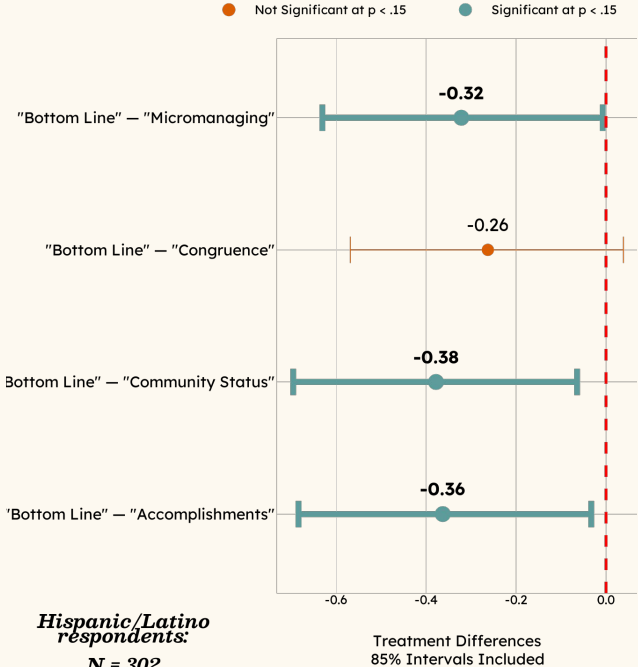
SMB owners focus on non-employee investments in "Bottom Line"

- Many small and medium sized business owners who listened to the "Bottom Line" message emphasize the importance of business investments alongside employee investments.

"Business owners have to have quality workers and benefits, pay well, and **make sure you invest money into the business to have the best outcome."**

In your opinion, what was the most important part of the message you just heard?

	Bottom Line
Importance of making employee investments	41%
Investing in your employees	15%
Provide quality jobs & compensation	13%
Take care of employees & working environment	12%
Hiring / getting the right people	5%
Work as a team	1%
Importance of making business investments	16%
Business owner identity	11%
Owners have to be responsible planners	4%
Owners never clock out & are the business	4%
Being an owner is hard work, takes dedication	3%

*responses can be coded under multiple codes, so percentages may not add up.

Topline 4: Summary

"Bottom Line" fell flat across the board.

Getting people to focus on their bottom line did not promote the adoption of JQE. A simple economic message falls short of objectives to expand JQE adoption.	**An appeal to financials is not sufficient and may backfire.**	**Open-ended responses suggest that "Bottom Line" drew attention to non-workforce considerations.**

05. **Main Takeaways**

Message Assessment

	"Micromanaging"	"Community Status"	"Accomplishments"	"Bottom Line"	"Congruence"
Increased Support for Specific Job Quality Elements	✓	✓	✓ (Black respondents, Democrats)		✓
Increased Value of Job Quality to the Business	✓	✓			✓
Increased Efficacy to Provide JQE to Employees	✓	✓			
Increased Perceived Value of Job Quality to Business Owner	✓	✓	✓ (Democrats)		
Increased Willingness to Support Employees Financially		✓ (Full sample and Democrats)	✓ (Democrats)		
Promoted Positive Emotions	✓				
Shareability	✓ (Full sample and White respondents)				
Identification with Speaker					

Key Findings

Toplines 1 and 2: *"Micromanaging" and "Community Status" were the most effective messages*

"Micromanaging" was particularly effective among Republican and White small-to-medium sized business owners. It also increased positive emotions across the board.

"Community Status" was the only message to increase willingness to spend on behalf of employees.

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It drove support for specific job quality initiatives and for belief in job quality being good for business.

Topline 4: **"Bottom Line" fell flat across the board.**

Simply highlighting economic benefits of JQE doesn't move the needle (and often backfires).

Recommendations

Good Jobs = Tight Ship

Sell JQE as a means of improving operations and regaining control.

Use imagery and language connoting smooth operations and fine-tuned systems.

Achieving Mainstay Status

Show small and medium sized business owners the path from better jobs to a better reputation and deeper ties to the community.

Small-to-midsize business owners value their roles as positive forces in the community but need to be shown how their role as an employer fits in to that.

Appeal to Democratic and Black Small-to-Midsize Business Owners' 5-Star Ambitions

Emphasize to these audiences that true excellence requires excellent job quality.

Businesses that make a name for themselves have great employees, and great employees are the result of good jobs.

Move Beyond the Balance Sheet

The straightforward financial case for improving job quality is not sufficient and may pull small and medium sized business owners' focus away from workforce issues.

Example application of findings: CDFI Annual Convening

Recommendations for CDFIs:

- CDFIs focus on the financial aspects of businesses, **but here we find that focusing too much on the bottom line may lead small business owners to downplay jobs. CDFIs should also focus on providing HR support, so that clear expectations are created between employer and employee.**

- To get businesses to value job quality, **CDFIs should emphasize how job quality can buy autonomy and piece of mind for business owners.** A business' operations will be smoother and its owner more independent if it has high quality, trustworthy employees. But these employees can only be attracted with good jobs.

- Where possible, **CDFIs should also highlight that having good relations with the community is good for business.** Remind business owners that providing good jobs to employees is a good tool for establishing good relations with the community.

Aspen Institute JQE

Content Test Analysis

September 28, 2023
Prepared for The Aspen Institute

N = 910

Field dates:
September 8 to September 13, 2023

01. **Process + Objectives**

02. **Methodology**

03. **Content Creation**

04. **Results**

05. **Main Takeaways**

06. **Appendix**

01. **Process + Objectives**

Project framework & checkpoints

Narrative Lab Process

1	2	3	4
Landscape Analysis + Planning	**Metaphor Elicitation**	**Message Testing**	**Content Testing + Playbook Development**
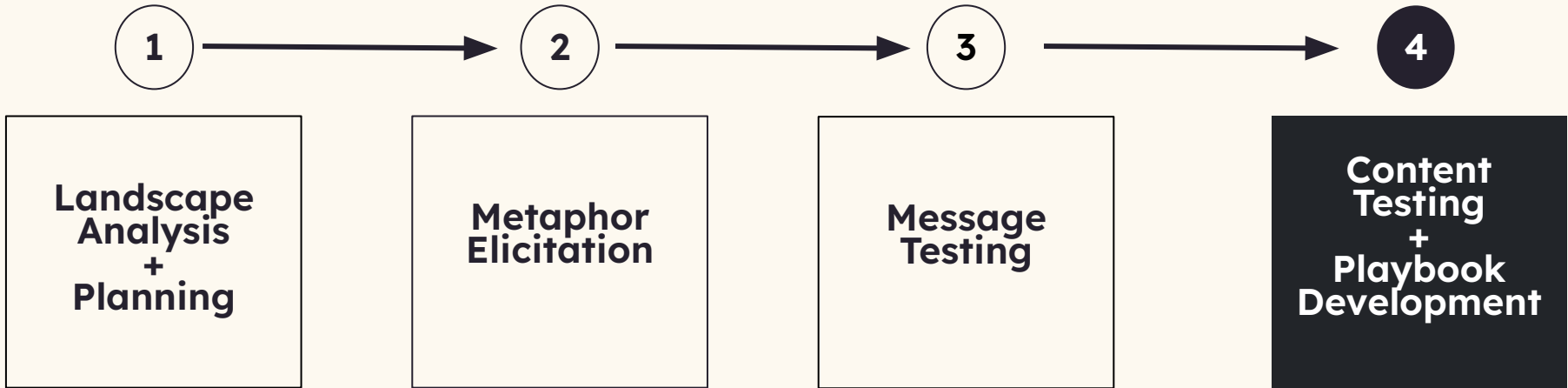
Job Quality Narrative Lab Process

4

Content Testing + Playbook Development

Current Phase

- ○ Conduct surveys with small-to-midsize business owners and supporting institutions (CDFIs & small business associations)

- ○ Test content we may use to recruit their participation in an online webinar

- ○ Explore which tested item is the most effective

02. **Methodology**

Experimental Design

Research And Analysis - Content And Message Testing

How Content Testing Works
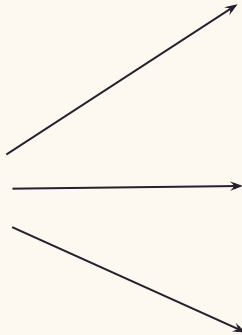
Content Version 1

Content Version 2

Control
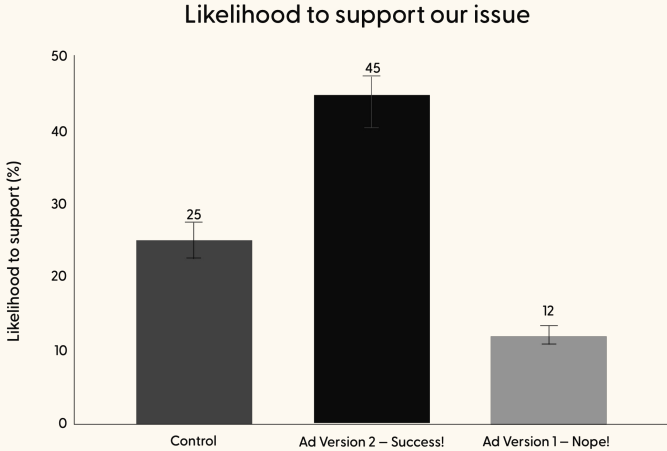
Likelihood to support our issue

We use validated survey panels to recruit a sample of convenience representing the people that you want to persuade.

We randomly assign respondents into groups. These groups are pretty identical to ensure that no bias is introduced. Each group views either test creative or control creative.

When we compare the differences in values, beliefs, opinions between those who saw test creative vs. control.

About the Content Test Participants

Full sample (N) was 910 small-to-medium business owners aged 18 and over with the following characteristics:

01 Race/Ethnicity:

n = 390

42.9%

White

n = 270

29.7%

Black

n = 250

27.5%

Hispanic / Latino

02 Political Party Membership:

n = 459

50.4%

Democrat

n = 138

15.2%

Independent

n = 313

34.4%

Republican
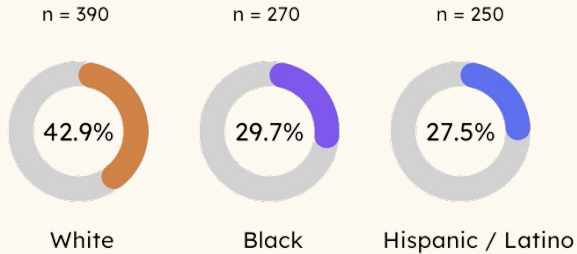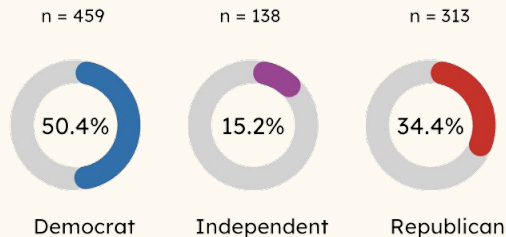
03 Gender Identity:

439 (48.2%) Female
466 (51.2%) Male
5 (.005%) Neither Male nor Female

04 Age:

49.3% of respondents were **between 30 and 49 years old**

05 College Education:

36.0% of respondents **possess a Bachelor's degree or higher**

06 Business Size:

615 (67.6%) small business owners with 1 to 10 employees
252 (27.7%) medium business owners with 11 to 50 employees

07 Industry:

135 Construction

102 Retail

59 Professional Services

55 Arts & Recreation

46 Health & Social Services

44 Manufacturing

42 Finance & Insurance

36 Real Estate & Leasing

34 Mining & Extraction

30 Wholesale

Measurement: Job Quality Pillars

- **Agreement:** To what extent do you agree with the message you just heard?

- **Shareability:** How likely would you be to share the message you just heard with your friends and family?

- **Attend free:** The e-invite invites you to attend a webinar about Job Quality. Given what you know about the event from the e-invite, how likely would you be to attend the webinar?

- **Learn more:** Would you be interested in learning more about the webinar and the organization that sponsors it?

- **Positive emotions/negative emotions**

- **Value of JQE***
  - **Economic stability**
  - **Economic mobility**
  - **Economic voice**

* Respondents viewed the JQE diagram while answering these questions.

03. Content Creation

How previous work influenced our messages

Good Job Quality Elements

1. **Equity, Respect, and Voice**
   - Employee satisfaction

2. **Economic Stability**
   - Compensation
   - Benefits

3. **Economic Mobility**
   - Incentives
   - Professional growth
   - Wealth-building

Good Jobs: A Working Definition

Economic Stability

- ❑ Stable, family-sustaining pay
- ❑ Sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits
- ❑ Fair, reliable scheduling practices
- ❑ Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions

Economic Mobility

- ❑ Clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways
- ❑ Accessible, paid training and development opportunities
- ❑ Wealth-building opportunities

Good Jobs

Equity, Respect & Voice

- ❑ Organizational and management culture, policies, and practices that:
  - ❑ are transparent and enable accountability
  - ❑ support a sense of belonging and purpose
  - ❑ advance DEIA*
  - ❑ and address discrimination.
- ❑ Ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices

*DEIA: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

Phase 1: Metaphor Elicitation

Insight: Highlight how JQE maintains their position at the top and in control

Power loss
Their reactions further perpetuate lack of control over employees

Power-driven
Small-to-medium sized business owners start businesses because they value power, autonomy and independence

Insight: Maintain sense of autonomy when advising on JQE. Idea must come from them

Breaking the power cycle

Power failure
They plan for all aspect of their business except for job quality, failing to see the connection between job quality and hiring/retaining employees

Insight: Remind small-to-midsize business owners that JQE is *worth* planning for/is core to business

Power grab
They lament the lack of employee loyalty and aspire to keep employees in line

Insight: Draw connection between JQE, loyalty and good customer service

Power tools
They convince themselves that the jobs they offer come with 'perks'. They justify their lack of JQE planning with narratives that place employee satisfaction out of their control

Insight: Draw connection between JQE and control over employees, point out incongruity

Phase 2: Message Test

Accomplishments

— Appeals to **the drive to achieve**, rise above the competition

Bottom Line

— Appeals to **financial concerns**, the economic case for JQE

Community Status

— Appeals to **the desire for recognition**, to be **the "best on the block"**

Congruence

— Appeals to **the desire to live out one's values**, to "walk the walk"

Control and Autonomy

— Appeals to **the desire for control** and **a business that runs like a well-oiled machine**
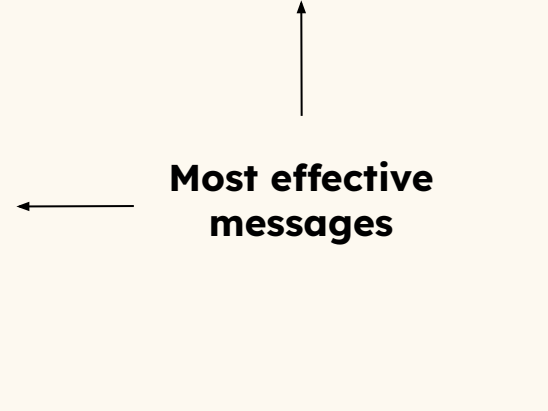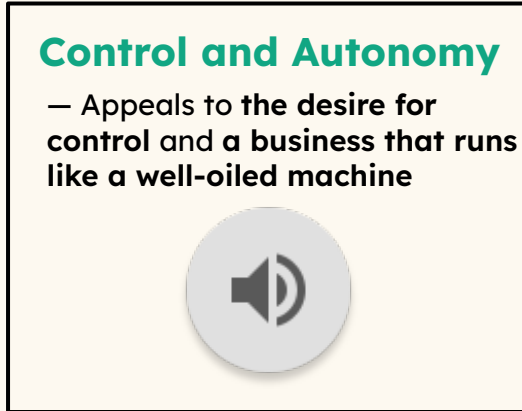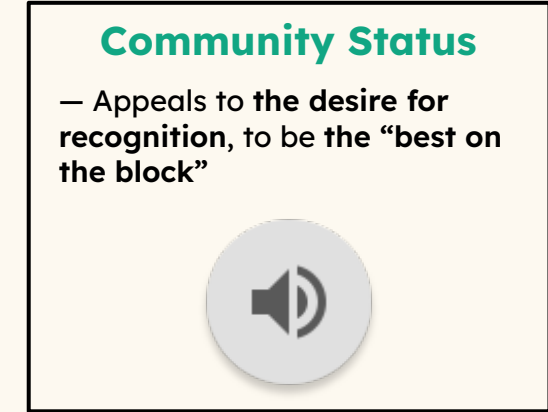
Most effective messages

Phase 3: Content Test Research Objectives

From our message test, we identified two effective message directions:

"Autonomy and Control" & **"Community Status"**

In our next phase of testing:

Zoom in on more granular themes of these messages	Explore practical applications of messages

- Autonomy
- Control
- Community
- Status

i.e., an invitation to a webinar hosted by Aspen Institute
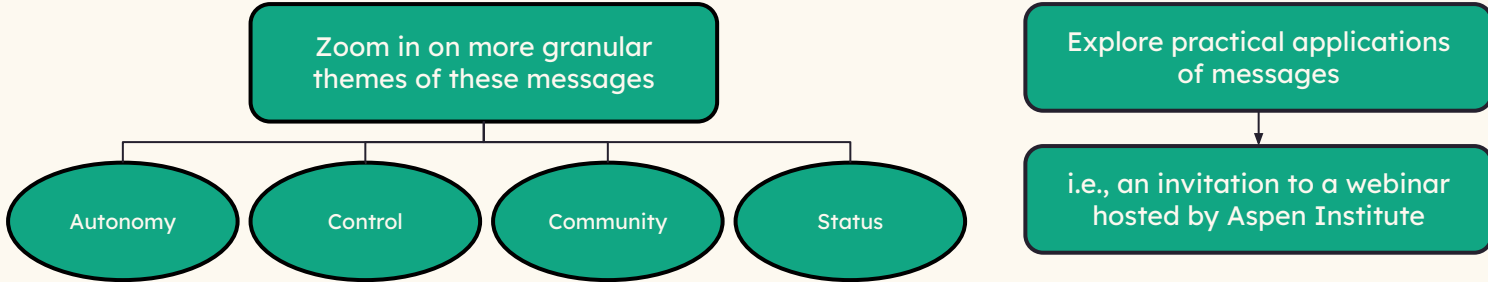
We know all messages are effective

We are exploring which one is the best and worst in the particular context of inviting business owners to a JQE Webinar.

Content Test: Webinar E-Invite for CDFIs & SMB owners

Control	Autonomy	Community	Status

04. **Results**

Key Findings

Topline 1: **"Community" was the strongest invitation**

- It was close to the competition, but "Community" is slightly better than all other messages.

- For certain subgroups, "Community" promotes:
  - More agreement
  - More willingness to attend a webinar
  - More willingness to learn more
  - More positive emotions than other treatments

- Given these advantages, and the lack of any drawbacks from this message, "Community" is the clear winner.

Topline 2: **"Status" was the least strong invitation**

- Although also close to the competition, "Status" is slightly weaker than all other messages.

- The "Status" treatment:
  - Encouraged fewer to attend the webinar
  - It promoted fewer positive emotions
  - It persuaded key populations against the importance of Job Quality

- In short, "Status" was the least effective message.

Recommendations

In the context of inviting business owners to an event:

Highlight how providing job quality strengthens one's links to their community

Exposing participants to the "Community" message clearly made them more interested in and willing to attend a webinar about job quality. Future invitations should be modeled after the "Community" asset tested in this content test.

Do not copy the visual elements from the "Status" treatment

"Status" made it less likely that participants would be interested in attending a job quality webinar. This perhaps was because of the content of the message, or perhaps it was because of the visual content of that treatment, but "Status" shows us an example of the least effective message among those we considered.

Include smiling faces and happy people interacting with each other

It is interesting to note that "Community" had the highest number of happy faces, and "Status" showed one person giving her back to the reader. Visual cues matter. Make sure the visual components are engaging, inclusive and that they draw people in.

"Autonomy" and "Control" can be used as well.

Remember that our message test told us that all of these messages were strong messages. "Autonomy" and "Control" did not excel but all our comparisons start from a high baseline. "Autonomy" and "Control" elements could still be useful to include in future materials.

Summary Message Elements:	
✔	**Increase Agreement**
☐	**Promote Sharing**
✔	**Promote Webinar Attendance Likelihood**
☐	**Promote Willingness to Learn More**
✔	**Promote Positive Emotions**
☐	**Persuade about JQE**

Topline 1

"Community" was the top performer

# The "Community" treatment

First thing respondents noticed about the "Community" treatment

- Many noticed the happy and diverse people in the images

- Many noticed the importance of job quality

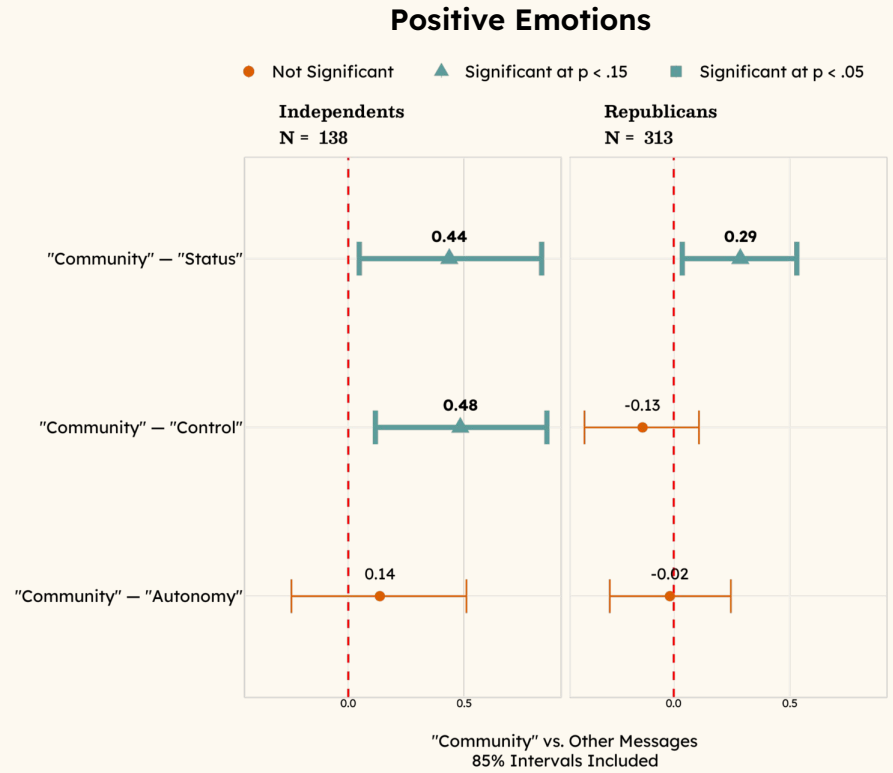- These seem to be some of the elements that made this treatment effective

	Community
Importance of high job quality for employee retention & teamwork	22%
Importance of job creation & quality	9%
Importance of quality employees & retention	5%
People working together	8%
The happy, diverse people	23%
Happy / smiling people	9%
Diverse representation	8%
The people	5%
Friendly looking people	1%
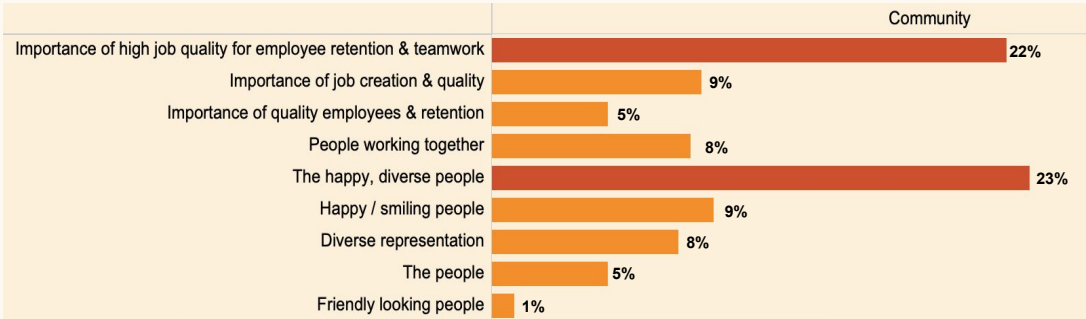
"Community" promoted agreement relative to other treatments

- In the full sample, "Community" promoted agreement relative to "Status," "Control," and "Autonomy."

- These positive effects for "Community" on agreement were also present among Black and White subgroups, and among Republican and Independent subgroups.
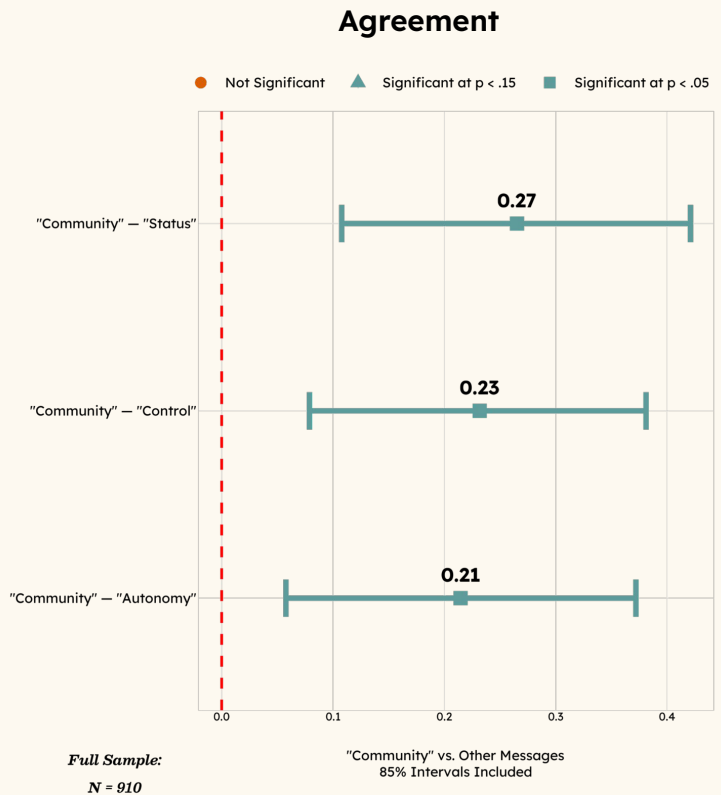
Agreement

Full Sample:

N = 910

"Community" promoted a series of positive effects in several subgroups

- "Community" promoted positive emotions among Republicans and Independents.

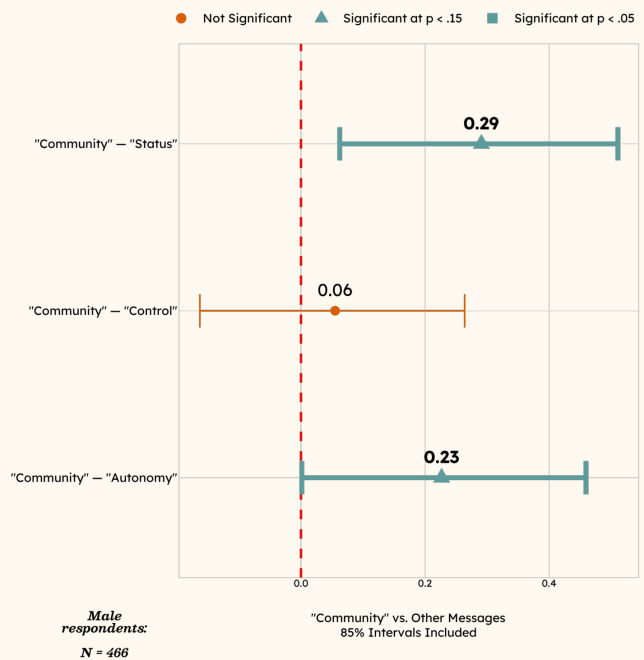- These effects only existed in these subgroups, but not in the full sample.

Positive Emotions

● Not Significant   ▲ Significant at p < .15   ■ Significant at p < .05

Independents N = 138   **Republicans** N = 313

"Community" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included

"Community" promoted a series of positive effects in several subgroups

- "Community" made male respondents more willing to attend a JQE webinar.

- These effects only existed in this subgroup, but not in the full sample.

Willingness to attend webinar
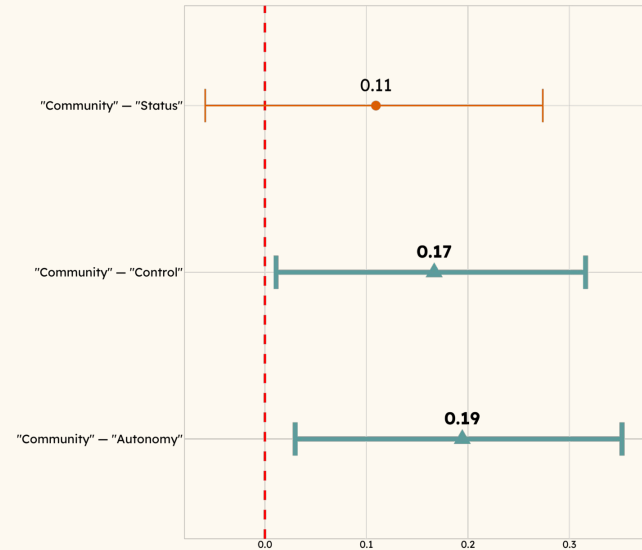
Male respondents:

Male respondents:

N = 466

"Community" promoted a series of positive effects in several subgroups

- "Community" made Independents more willing to learn more about JQE.

- These effects only existed in this subgroup, but not in the full sample.

Willingness to learn more

Independents:

● Not Significant   ▲ Significant at p < .15   ■ Significant at p < .05

"Community" — "Status"   0.11

"Community" — "Control"   **0.17**

"Community" — "Autonomy"   **0.19**

Independent respondents:

N = 138

"Community" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included

Topline 1: Summary

"Community" was the most effective message overall.

"Community" promoted agreement in the full sample and among Black and White respondents.	"Community" promoted desirable effects in several other subgroups.	It promoted positive emotions among Republicans and Independents. It made male respondents more willing to attend a JQE webinar. It made Independents more willing to to learn more about JQE.

Summary Message Elements:	
☐	**Increase Agreement**
☐	**Promote Sharing**
X	**Promote Webinar Attendance Likelihood**
☐	**Promote Willingness to Learn More**
X	**Promote Positive Emotions**
X	**Persuade about JQE**

Topline 2

"Status" was the weakest invitation

The "Status" treatment

While "Status" worked in the message test and our qualitative work, the "Status" images included in the content of this design put people off

	Community		Status	
The happy, diverse people	23%		14%	
Happy / smiling people	9%		3%	
Diverse representation	8%		5%	
The people	5%		5%	
Friendly looking people	1%		1%	
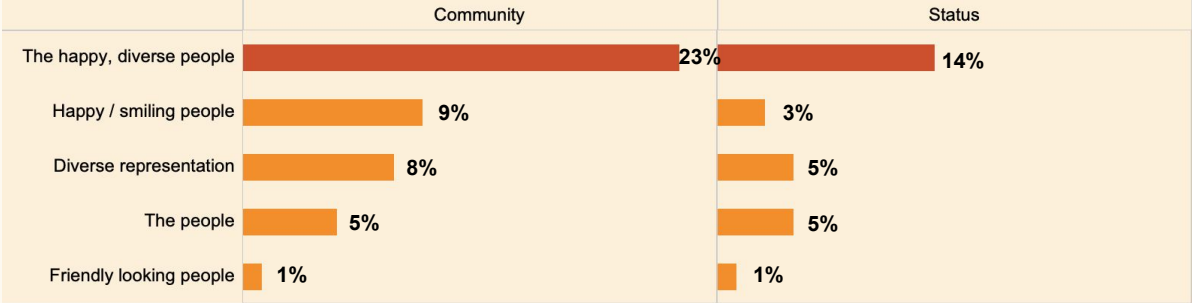
People responded more favorably to the presence of people showing positive emotions in "Community" over "Status"

The "Status" invite made people less willing to attend the webinar

- Relative to "Community" and "Autonomy," the "Status" invite made full-sample participants less likely to want to attend a webinar about job quality.

- Subgroup analysis shows that these effects were particularly pronounced among Republican respondents.

Willingness to attend webinar

Full sample:

Republicans:

Full Sample:
N = 910

"Status" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included

Republican respondents:
N = 313

"Status" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included
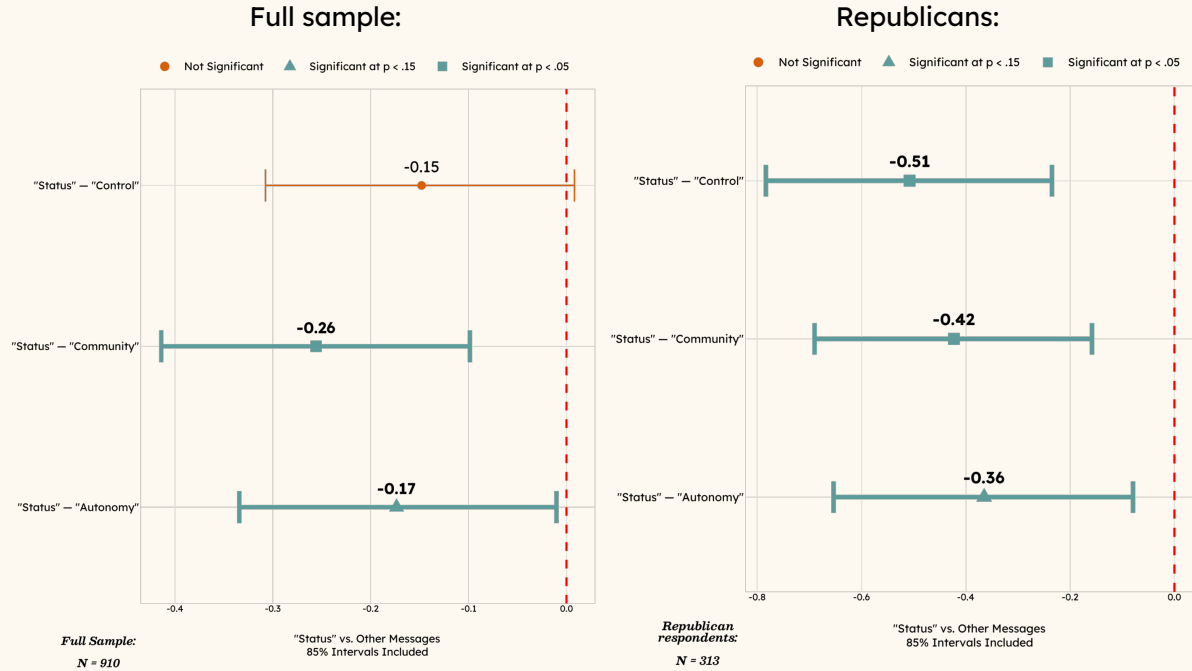
"Status" also reduced positive emotions relative to other treatments

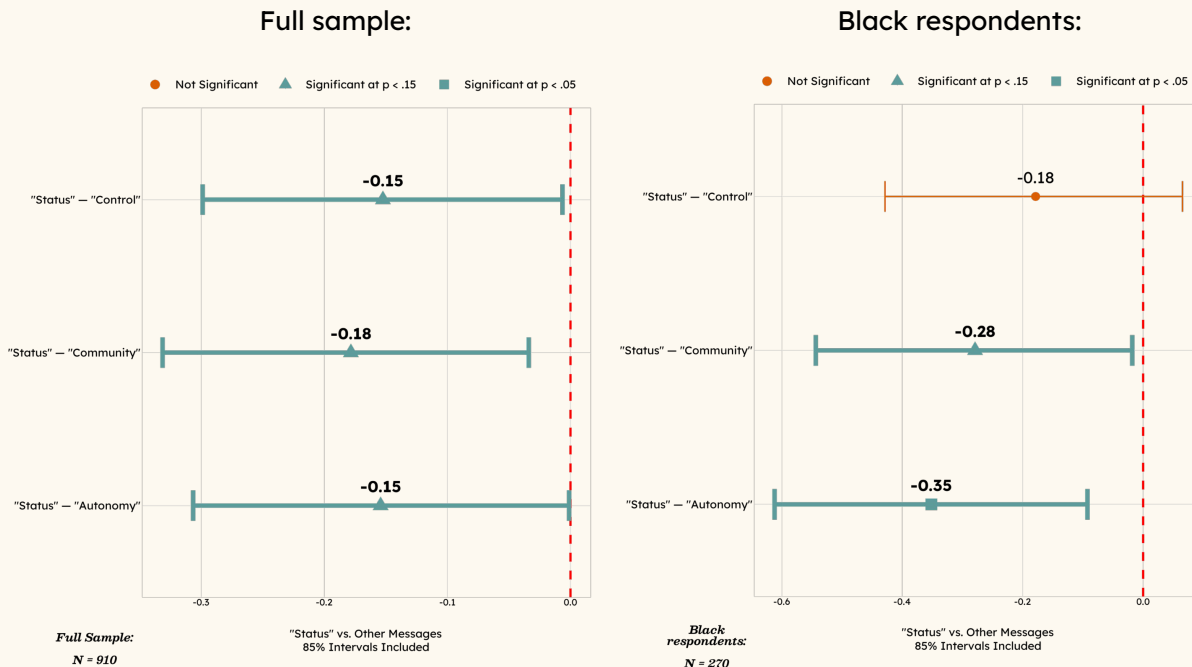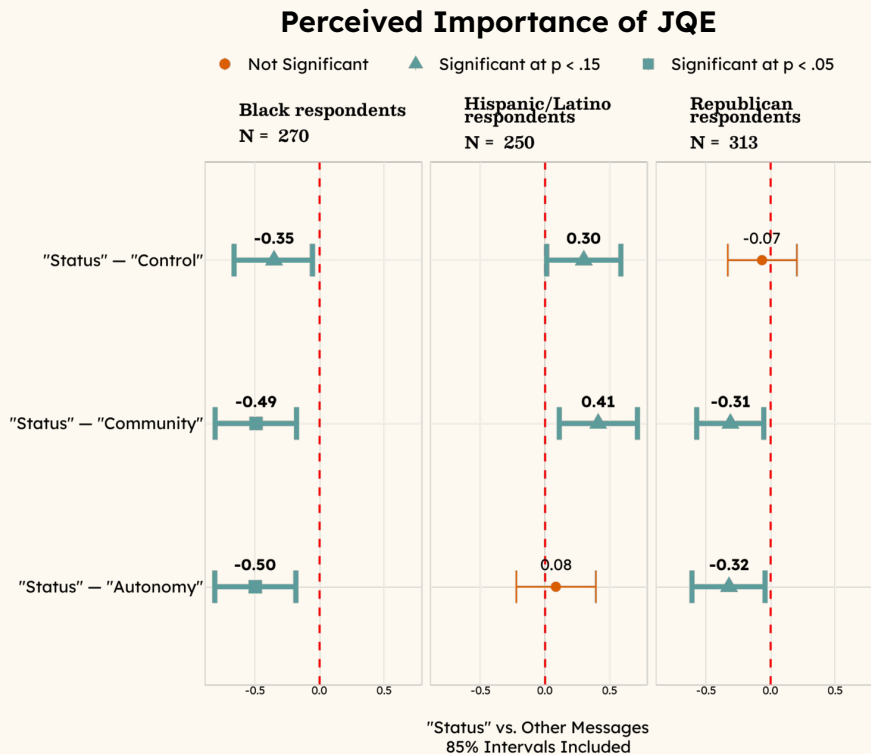- For the full sample, positive emotions were the lowest in the "Status" condition relative to all others.

- In our subgroup analyses, we found that similar effects were also present among Black participants.

Positive Emotions

Full sample:

Black respondents:

In certain subsamples, "Status" persuaded respondents <u>against</u> the importance of Job Quality

- In the full sample, "Status" did not have any significant effects in terms of Job Quality persuasion.

- For Hispanic/Latino respondents, the "Status" treatment did improve support for JQE.

- But in other groups, such as Black and Republican respondents, participants in the "Status" condition showed less support for JQE than those exposed to other treatments.

- These mixed effects do reveal a slight disadvantage for the "Status" treatment, as it is less effective in promoting JQE among some key audiences.

Perceived Importance of JQE

● Not Significant   ▲ Significant at p < .15   ■ Significant at p < .05

Black respondents N = 270	Hispanic/Latino respondents N = 250	Republican respondents N = 313

"Status" — "Control": Black -0.35 ▲; Hispanic/Latino 0.30 ▲; Republican -0.07 ●

"Status" — "Community": Black -0.49 ■; Hispanic/Latino 0.41 ■; Republican -0.31 ▲

"Status" — "Autonomy": Black -0.50 ■; Hispanic/Latino 0.08 ●; Republican -0.32 ▲

"Status" vs. Other Messages
85% Intervals Included

Topline 2: Summary

"Status" was the least effective e-invite

"Status" made respondents, especially Republicans, less willing to attend the webinar.

"Status" reduced positive emotions in the full sample and among Black participants.

Even though "Status" increased support for JQE among Hispanic/Latino participants, it also reduced support for Job Quality among Black and Republican participants.

05. **Main Takeaways**

Content Assessment: Full Sample

	1. "Community"	2. "Status"	3. "Autonomy"	4. "Control"
Agree	✓ (vs. 2, 3, and 4)	✓ (vs. 1)	✓ (vs. 1)	✓ (vs. 1)
Share				
Attend Free	✓ (vs. 2)	✓ (vs. 1 and 3)	✓ (vs. 2)	
Learn More				
Attend Dollar	✓ (vs. 4)			✓ (vs. 1)
Positive Emotion Scale	✓ (vs. 2)	✓ (vs. 1 and 4)		✓ (vs. 2)
JQE Importance				
Economic Stability Interest				
Economic Mobility Interest				
Equity, Respect, and Voice Interest				

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Topline 1: "Community" was the strongest invitation

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- For certain subgroups, "Community" promotes:
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- Given these advantages, and the lack of any drawbacks from this message, "Community" is the clear winner.

Topline 2: "Status" was the least strong invitation

- Although also close to the competition, "Status" is slightly weaker than all other messages.

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Recommendations

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Include smiling faces and happy people interacting with each other

It is interesting to note that "Community" had the highest number of happy faces, and "Status" showed one person giving her back to the reader. Visual cues matter. Make sure the visual components are engaging, inclusive and that they draw people in.

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