

## [New York Festivals Advertising Awards](#)

Creating amazing work may be its own reward. Having your work seen and recognized by the global creative community is inspiring, encouraging and energizing. Nice fuel for your next project.

New York Festivals Advertising Awards are a simple way of telling clients and vendors that you are not interchangeable, that there is a standard of excellence in which quality and passion matter. It's a reminder that the agencies who represent these values are truly the ones you want working for you and the ones you want to work for.

**Please note: there is a maximum of 800 words limit for this entry.**

### **Forces of Change**

**Brand: AT&T & CNN**

**Campaign: Forces of Change**

### **Category: WI04. Positive World Impact: Empowerment**

Entries in this Category Group, Positive World Impact, use creative communication to encourage and affect changes in attitude, perception or behavior which will ultimately have a positive impact on the world. With intent toward the betterment of people, animals or the environment, winners in these categories may include all types of media.

- Work intended to fight against racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination by promoting empowerment, equality, rights, tolerance or inclusion

**Judging Criteria:** 40% Idea/Concept / 35% Brand Relevance / 25% Execution

### **Latest Assets:**

[Written entries](#)

[Website with video](#) – it's the video called "The Black Scientific Renaissance" that we'll be entering, so do focus on that please!

If you don't feel like you have enough info, let me know – we have more detailed ones that we created for another client (the media agency.. 😊 )

Through a powerful partnership between CNN and AT&T, the short documentary series “Forces of Change” was created to showcase the phenomenal contributions of the Black STEM community, while promoting diversity and inclusion within AT&T’s workforce. Race is an incredibly complex topic, especially for brands. Justifiably, brands are being held to a higher critical standard as people are becoming more aware of the scope of racial inequity. Nowadays, brands are being called out when their handling of racial subjects comes off as cynical opportunism or inauthenticity. This is why it was important that we utilised a production unit consisting of minority groups in creating the “Forces of Change” debut “Black Science Renaissance” to delve into this realm, successfully creating an authentic expression of a very important and sensitive subject area.

According to a 2020 Harvard Business Review report, 60% of the U.S. population say how a brand responds to racial justice protests will influence whether they buy or boycott the brand in the future. The same report indicates 60% of consumers say brands should take steps to address the root causes of racial inequity while 57% say brands must educate the public. Our team felt a cultural responsibility to consider the deep nuances of racial discourse in America in 2020. George Floyd’s death and the ensuing protests rose the level of intensity surrounding discussions of race, and that meant AT&T’s efforts needed to place a greater emphasis on Black-centric creativity, both in the stories being portrayed, and the team responsible for creating them.

Black workers make up 11% of the U.S. workforce, but represent only 9% of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) workers. Further, studies have shown a large gap in STEM education performance, with 18% of Black students scoring at or above proficient, compared to 56% of White students. These statistics highlight a clear need for better representation. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has become an important, proven core strategy for many of today's successful businesses and organizations, which we wanted to promote within the “Forces of Change” series.

The “Black Science Renaissance” debut film centered on Dr. James E. West, a prolific Black scientist at AT&T’s Bell Labs. The “Black Science Renaissance” era, which ran from the 1950’s-1970’s in America, marked a revolution for Black scientists and technologists who made substantial advancements in tech and science for the betterment of society. Unfortunately, these pioneers were not widely credited nor acknowledged nearly as prevalently as their white counterparts in the field during that time.

In 1962, Dr. West developed the remarkable foil electret microphone. The patented technology derived from Dr. West’s invention is still used today within the smart devices of over 2.7 billion people. His contributions to the world of technology were exemplary, illustrated by the evocative imagery in the film including current footage and historical behind-the-scenes stills. We set the scene for an intimate conversation with this inspirational man who had lived and breathed both social discrimination and triumph through fortitude and mastery.

Speaking to our LGBTQIA+ inclusive production team, Dr. West shared his experiences and divulged why it was that he chose to work at Bell Labs. He remarked, "There were other people who looked like me that I wanted to be like when I grew up." Dr. West and his Black Renaissance predecessors made substantial contributions to the telephony and communications fields, and leveraged success for the next generation of black scientists.

We also interviewed Ellington, Dr. West's daughter and CEO of Sonavi Labs, a leading-edge medical device company. She spoke profoundly about what it was like growing up with a father who made history, and how it fuelled her passion for STEM subjects. The film emotively brings across Ellington's sense of purpose through transcending discrimination in the field; she is a leader within the Black STEM community just as her father is.

Dr. West's programs have helped hundreds of Black and Female scientists pioneer great technological advancements at Bell Labs. Over 30 years, Bell funded and mentored more than 500 underrepresented minority and female PHD recipients through its CRFP program, who went on to achieve a multitude of technological breakthroughs. This explicates how crucial systemic support and advocacy is to the success of underrepresented groups.

"Forces of Change" debuted on YouTube and Facebook, with additional OTT cutdowns all driving to an immersive digital landing page expounding on West's story and teasing forthcoming episodes. Through the "Black Science Renaissance" film, we opened up people's eyes to the way Black scientists and technologists provided phenomenal advancements within society, which ultimately empowers other Black and minority groups to persevere within their own fields. Our film supports the current societal shift towards inclusivity within brands, feeding into the embracement of equality within society as a whole.