

THEY ASKED US

REAL PEOPLE. REAL VOICES. REAL IMPACT.

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
WHO DID THEY ASK?™

WHO DID THEY ASK?™



Many of us have asked this question after hearing a statistic, seeing the results of a poll, or reading a report about our communities: "Who Did They Ask?"

Sometimes the answer is clear; too often, it isn't. And sometimes we are left wondering whether anyone who looks like us, lives like us, spends like us, or shares like us, or shares our experiences was ever a part of the conversation.

Who Did They Ask?™ was created to help change that.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of They Asked Us, the official newsletter of Who Did They Ask?™.

This newsletter will keep our growing community connected to the research, people, conversations, and impact behind our work. You'll hear what we're learning, where we're going, who we're listening to, and most importantly, how you can make sure your voice is part of the story.

FROM OUR FOUNDER

"For Too Long, decisions have been made, stories have been told, and conclusions have been drawn without asking enough of us. Who Did They Ask?™ exists to make sure our voices are no longer missing from the data."

When I started asking questions about the Black premium cigar consumer, I kept encountering statistics that didn't seem to fully reflect the culture I was seeing around me.

That led me to one simple question: Who did they ask?

Instead of criticizing the research that already exists, I decided we should contribute to it. We should ask. We should listen. We should collect the data. And then we should let the findings speak.

The National Black Premium Cigar Consumer Study is our first opportunity to demonstrate what Who Did They Ask?™ can become.

I hope that someday, when someone encounters research about their community and asks, "Who did they ask?" thousands of people will be able to answer. "They asked us."

***-Dorian L. Smith, MSW, MBA
Founder, Who Did They Ask?™***



MEET OUR FOUNDING ADVISORY BOARD



ANTHONY
ARMSTRONG
MCKINNEY, TX



RALPH
KENOL, ESQ.
HOLLYWOOD, FL



EUFANCIA
LASH
AKRON, OH



EDWIN
MARTINEZ
BERLIN, NJ



DR. GREGORY
MCCORD, PH.D
DARLINGTON, SC



DAWN
OBIDIEBUBE
MIAMI, FL



ARNEICE
RICE
AKRON, OH



SANDRA
SANDERLIN
WILLIAMSTOWN, NJ



DWAYNE
TOWNSEND, SR.
AUSTINTOWN, OH



ERICA
TALLEY
PHILADELPHIA, PA

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION TOGETHER

To our Founding Advisory Board: Thank you for being among the first to answer the call, lend your expertise, and help build something designed to ensure more people can someday say: “They asked us.”

Who Did They Ask?™ is being built with the insight, experience, and commitment of a Founding Advisory Board whose members are helping shape the organization during its earliest and most important stage.

These founding members were personally selected by Founder Dorian L. Smith to bring diverse professional expertise, perspectives, networks, and lived experiences to the table as Who Did They Ask?™ establishes its research standards, governance structure, community engagement strategy, Communications, brand, and long-term direction.

The Founding Advisory Board is organized around five initial working committees: Research & Methodology; Outreach & Participant Engagement; Partnerships & Development; and Governance & Advisory Development. Together, members are helping ensure that our work is credible, thoughtful, community-centered, and positioned to make a lasting impact.

Their first assignment is also our first national undertaking: helping guide and support the National Black Premium Cigar Consumer Study and the effort to reach at least 3,000 participants nationwide.

These individuals believed in the vision before there was a national study, a published report, or a proven roadmap. As Who Did They Ask?™ grows, they will always hold a special distinction: Founding Advisory Board Member.

THE BLACK PREMIUM CIGAR CONSUMER STUDY

We're starting with a community that deserves to be better understood.

On September 1, 2026, Who Did They Ask?™ will officially launch the National Black Premium Cigar Consumer Study.

Our goal is ambitious: 3,000 voices from across America.

We are seeking black adults aged 21 and older who have smoked at least one premium cigar during the past 12 months.

The study will explore questions about purchasing behavior, brand preferences, cigar lounge experiences, spending, brand discovery, Black-owned cigar businesses, cigar culture, and the experiences that shape how Black consumers participate in the premium cigar community.

But the Study is about more than cigars. It is about what happens when a community has the opportunity to tell its own story through research.

WHY THIS RESEARCH MATTERS

The Black premium cigar community is visible and growing. We see it in Black cigar clubs and social groups. At cigar events and festivals. In Black-owned cigar lounges and through Black-owned cigar brands. Across thriving online communities and among cigar enthusiasts traveling the country for unique cigar experiences. But an important question remains:

What do we actually know about today's Black premium cigar consumer?

Not what we assume, not what social media suggests, not what we believe based on who walks through the doors of a single lounge.

What can credible research actually tell us?

Who are we? What do we value? Where do we smoke? What influences what we buy? How do we engage with brands and lounges? And what does our collective participation mean for the broader premium cigar industry?

3,000 ISNT JUST A NUMBER

Every completed survey represents a person. A story. A consumer. A cigar enthusiast. A lounge customer. A traveler. A club member. An entrepreneur. A perspective.

Our goal of 3,000 completed surveys isn't simply about reaching a research milestone. It's about building a national picture that reflects voices from communities across the country. And we need your help to reach them.

When the survey launches September 1st: Take it, share it, post it, send it to your cigar group, share it with your lounge, tell a friend.

One person can complete a survey. One person can also help us reach 100 more.

THE LISTENING LOUNGE TOUR

Research shouldn't only happen behind a computer screen.

That's why Who Did They Ask?™ is preparing to take this conversation directly into cigar communities across the country through our Listening Lounge Tour.

We'll visit participating cigar lounges and communities in markets across America to listen, learn, and have conversations that go deeper than survey questions alone can reach.

We'll ask people about their experiences. We'll listen to lounge owners. We'll hear from cigar clubs. We'll engage entrepreneurs and brand owners. And we'll talk directly with the people who make up today's Black cigar culture.

Because sometimes the most important insight begins with simply sitting down and listening.



STAY CONNECTED

Coming Spring 2027

The State of Black Cigar America Report

What does Black Cigar America really look like? Who are its consumers? Where do they gather? What brands do they support? And what impact are they having on the premium cigar industry and their communities?

In Spring 2027, Who Did They Ask?™ will release the inaugural State of Black Cigar America Report, a national look at the people, businesses, culture, and community shaping Black premium cigar America.

Built from insights gathered through the National Black Premium Cigar Consumer Study and Listening Lounge Tours, the report will feature consumer data and perspectives alongside stories about Black-owned cigar lounges and brands, cigar clubs and organizations, festivals and events, and community and charitable impact across the country.

More than a collection of statistics, the report will begin establishing a national record of a community whose story has too often gone undocumented.



YOUTUBE



TIKTOK



WEBSITE



INSTAGRAM



FACEBOOK



SIGN UP FOR A COPY
OF THE REPORT

Contact us

Have a question? Want to partner with us? Interested in participating in research? Have a story or perspective you believe should be heard?

Address

1177 Canton Road, Suite 201, Akron, OH 44312

Telephone

(484)388-6678

Website

www.theyaskedus.com

Email

info@theyaskedus.com