

Case Study

Private Screening of the "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" Documentary at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)



Introduction

PwC recently hosted a screening of "Blacks Can't Swim: Rewind" documentary at its Embankment headquarters in London. Created by Ed Accura, this documentary explores the reasons behind the lack of swimming participation among African, Caribbean, and Asian communities in the UK. The event was organised in collaboration with the Black Swimming Association (BSA), a non-profit dedicated to promoting water safety and swimming for all communities.

As a leading global professional services firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) offers audit, tax, and advisory services while demonstrating a strong commitment to diversity and inclusivity. The firm actively engages in initiatives that support social responsibility and community engagement, recognising the importance of addressing societal challenges like swimming disparities and water safety in underrepresented communities.

By collaborating with organisations such as the BSA, PwC underscores its dedication to promoting equity and inclusion through awareness and education. The screening of the "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" documentary exemplifies PwC's efforts to foster meaningful dialogue around critical issues, cultivating a culture of empathy, belonging, and shared responsibility among its workforce and the wider community.

Objectives and Goals

The primary objective of the screening was to raise awareness about swimming disparities and to foster discussions on water safety within diverse communities. By addressing this significant issue, PwC aimed to engage its employees in meaningful conversations that could lead to increased understanding and actionable initiatives around aquatic inclusivity. Importantly, the screening also instilled hope among the cast members, who are predominantly from low socioeconomic backgrounds, by demonstrating that they have a chance to overcome adversity and achieve their goals. Hosting the screening at such a high-profile organisation aimed to also inspire the cast to believe that everything is possible, regardless of their circumstances.

The Shocking Facts (Current Key Statistics)

According to a survey conducted in 2024 by **Sport England**, **97% of Black adults and 82% of Black children in England do not swim. 96% of Asian adults and 79% of Asian children in England do not swim.** (Sports England Active Lives Survey 2024)

Black Children are seven times more likely to die from drowning than their White peers, prompting experts to encourage them to learn how to swim. Children from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been held back from learning the life skill because of fears about water, hair protection and financial means which has left them at a greater risk.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that, on average, 236,000 people drown globally every year, with 90% of these deaths occurring in low- to middle-income countries. Africa has the highest drowning rate, while Asia experiences the highest number of drowning incidents.

The Event

The in-person screening of "Blacks Can't Swim: Rewind" was followed by a 45-minute Q&A discussion with Ed Accura, addressing the critical issue of swimming participation in diverse communities. The event confronted uncomfortable truths and fostered vital conversations about generational barriers to swimming within organisations.

Benefits to PwC

By hosting this screening, PwC fulfilled its corporate social responsibility commitments outlined in its targeted racial equality plan and five-point inclusion plan. The documentary screening, followed by a live Q&A, provided numerous benefits for both the organisation and its employees. By addressing swimming accessibility and water safety, PwC demonstrated its commitment to social responsibility and inclusivity, aligning with corporate values that prioritise diversity and community engagement.

Moreover, the event highlighted the importance of diversity in representation, particularly featuring cast members from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This not only resonated with employees but also reinforced the message that success is achievable regardless of one's circumstances. The screening facilitated a culture of awareness and empathy among PwC's workforce, enhancing team cohesion as employees from various backgrounds engaged in discussions about these critical issues. This initiative not only reinforced PwC's goals of promoting equity but also laid the groundwork for ongoing conversations around water safety and swimming disparities. By connecting these themes to broader societal challenges, PwC positioned itself as a leader in advocating for change, helping to foster a more inclusive workplace culture that values social responsibility and community well-being.

Audience Benefits

For individual employees, particularly those from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the screening provided a platform to voice their experiences and concerns related to swimming and water safety. This was especially significant for employees who may have personal stories or cultural perspectives that resonated with the documentary's themes. The live Q&A encouraged open dialogue, allowing employees to confront difficult conversations about aquaphobia, representation, and community support.

By facilitating these discussions, PwC empowered its workforce to advocate for change, both within the organisation and in their communities. Ultimately, this initiative enriched the corporate culture and equipped employees with the knowledge and motivation to contribute positively to societal issues, fostering a more inclusive and supportive workplace.

Personal Testimonials

Saye Mkgangama, Partner at PwC, stated, "Such an important topic. Thank you, Ed Accura, for coming to share so openly with us. I look forward to our future initiatives together." Brian Bob-Jones, a Business Architect at PwC UK, expressed gratitude for the inspiring session, noting, "Overcoming the fear of water is one thing, but taking the first

step to want to do something about it is another." David Adair, Director of Community Engagement and PwC UK, reflected on the stimulating debate surrounding the film, calling it a significant topic that needs continuous discourse.

Impact Assessment

Feedback gathered from attendees indicated a significant increase in awareness of swimming disparities and a commitment to fostering inclusivity within the organisation.

Audience Feedback

The audience feedback from the screening reflects the powerful impact of the documentary on viewers. Many attendees expressed appreciation for the film's ability to address such an important issue, noting that it was refreshing to see personal stories shared that were incredibly moving. A sense of responsibility emerged among viewers, motivating them to promote swimming in their own communities. Several participants expressed excitement about sharing the film with friends and family, highlighting its relevance to diverse audiences.

Furthermore, individuals with a background in aquatics noted how the event deepened their understanding of the barriers faced by people from different ethnicities. Attendees acknowledged the importance of having these conversations, thanking the creators for producing such a significant film. Many felt empowered to discuss swimming with their peers and confront personal challenges, such as aquaphobia. The documentary's focus on cultural aspects of swimming resonated with viewers, particularly parents who recognised the importance of water safety for their children. Ultimately, the film inspired a desire to engage further, with several individuals expressing an intention to volunteer with local swimming initiatives.

Conclusion

The screening of "Blacks Can't Swim: Rewind" at PwC's headquarters in London exemplified how organisations can engage in meaningful discussions concerning swimming disparities and cultural inclusion. By tackling these important issues and sharing personal experiences, PwC and its attendees took critical steps toward fostering a more equitable approach to swimming and water safety, ultimately empowering communities and individuals alike. Many attendees expressed that the documentary not only addresses swimming challenges but also serves as an inspirational narrative that showcases the potential for success from their communities.

Additionally, the initiative reinforces PwC's ongoing commitment to inclusivity and social responsibility, laying the groundwork for future actions that can lead to real change. By highlighting the stories of individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds, the event provided a valuable opportunity for organisations to open conversations among diverse ethnicities in the workforce about critical subjects that may not have been discussed in the past. We encourage other organisations to consider hosting similar screenings and events that promote dialogue and awareness around critical social issues. By doing so, you can create an inclusive atmosphere where all voices are heard and valued.

About the Documentaries

The **Blacks Can't Swim** and **Changing the Narrative** documentaries have provided crucial insights into why a disproportionate number of people of African, Caribbean, and Asian heritage do not swim. These documentaries offer valuable perspectives through the lived experiences shared in the films.

These documentaries are essential for anyone who would like to better understand how a lack of diversity and inclusion in aquatics has impacted individuals within ethnically diverse communities. By participating in these screenings, viewers will gain insight into the complex barriers to aquatic engagement, the opportunities and benefits that being able to swim can provide, and how participation can be promoted within African, Caribbean, and Asian communities.

The screenings offer a comfortable and safe environment for individuals to reflect on their views and address these issues. Additionally, the documentaries delve into important topics beyond swimming, exploring mental health, physical health, dietary choices, and other areas that can benefit from aquatic activities.

For organisations or communities aiming to align with their strategic priorities and focus on reducing inequalities, especially those with a diverse workforce, these screenings offer an opportunity to engage with important societal issues and encourage positive change. By fostering discussions around inclusivity and water safety, organisations can contribute to enhancing community well-being and collectively work towards changing the narrative surrounding swimming participation.

If you are interested in hosting your screening, private packages including a Q&A session are available via the details below, furthering the documentary's mission to raise awareness and advocate for inclusion in aquatics regardless of ethnicity.

Contact info@changingthenarrative.film to initiate change in your workplace and community.

Together, we can foster a culture of understanding, safety, and empowerment for all.

For more information, interested parties can visit www.changingthenarrative.film