

4 ways to get culturally driven marketing right

Article

Lunar New Year is approaching, providing another opportunity for brands to deliver culturally relevant campaigns. Successful brands can forge meaningful connections with diverse audiences, such as the Asia-Pacific community, communicate values of inclusion, and engage consumers in new markets. Unsuccessful brands risk losing equity, loyalty, and, ultimately, sales.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of consumers support brands that offer targeted multicultural and diverse-focused services, products, or experiences, per the Association of National Advertisers' Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing (ANA AIMM).

The key is authenticity—but what does that really mean? Here are five tips to get culturally driven marketing right, drawing insights from real-world examples.

1. Understand the cultural significance

Slapping cultural symbols and phrases across products or promotions isn't enough to truly honor a special day. This risks being insensitive and hurting a brand's credibility. To respect tradition, don't skip the research stage—take time to understand the event's context and history and involve team members who have personal connections with it.

Case study: Ikea's Ramadan collection includes kitchenware and home decor featuring colors inspired by the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. Ceramics, cushions, and lanterns are included to help hosts celebrate the three-day Eid al-Fitr festival of fast-breaking.





Photo: Ikea

2. Collaborate with community members

Working with local creators not only injects personality into a campaign, but also allows brands to tap into the community those creators are close with. A quarter of UK and US consumers agree that one of the most memorable things a brand can do on social media is to speak out about a cause that aligns with their values, per Sprout Social. This is also an opportunity to uplift smaller creators, weaving in their stories to give big-box retailers a more intimate appeal.

Case study: Commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month 2023, Target released exclusive products created by Hispanic and Latino artists, curated in-stores and online to make them easier to find. Apparel, accessories, books, games, and more were part of its wider “Más Que” (“More Than”) campaign, intended to appeal to the Hispanic and Latino audience all year-round.

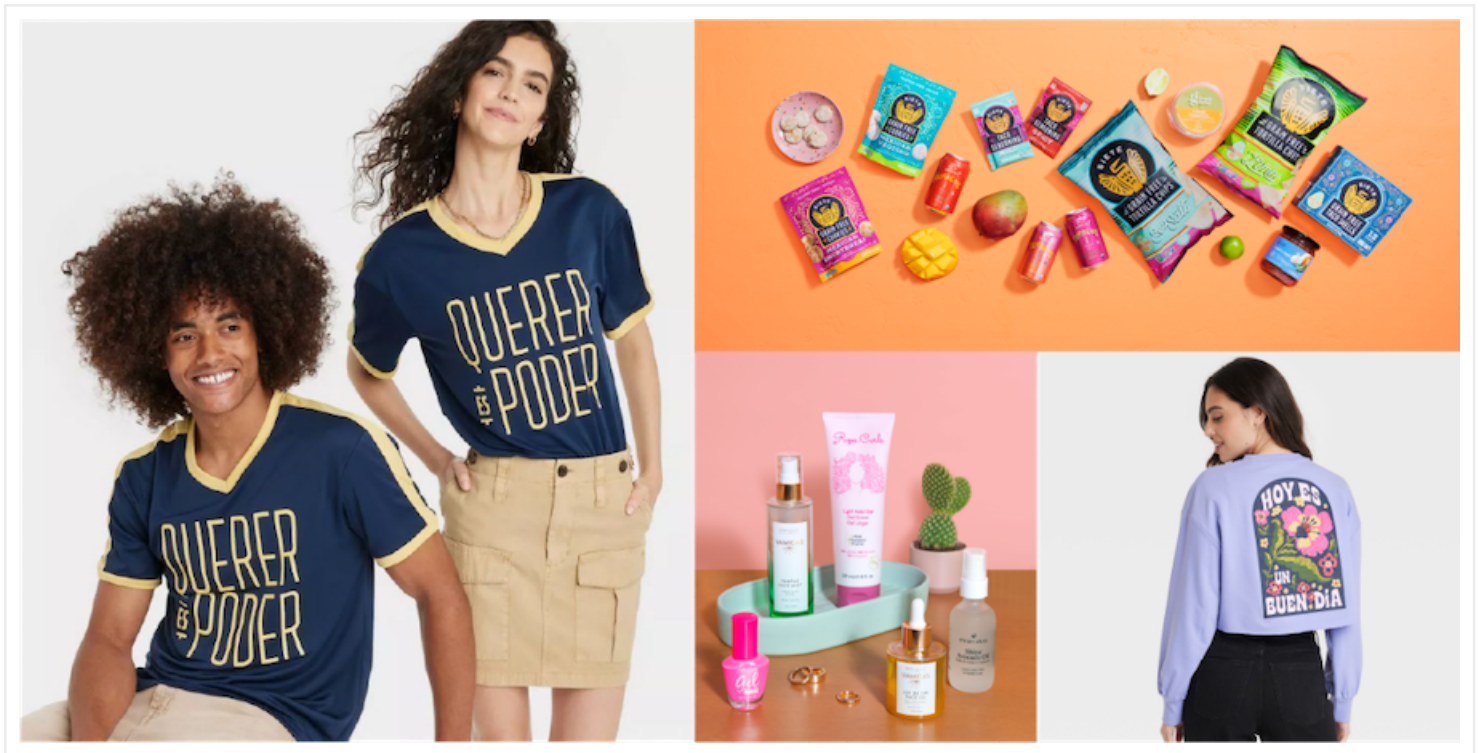


Photo: Target

3. Consider relevant charitable initiatives

Strengthen the brand's commitment to positive, meaningful change by supporting a social cause. But don't waver in that support—77% of consumers are willing to abandon brands that reverse their support for diversity, equity, and inclusion pledges. Take the initiatives further by involving consumers in the decision-making process for charities and ensuring transparency throughout the campaign, highlighting contributions and impact.

Case study: In advance of Lunar New Year, Panda Express is once again pledging \$100,000 and matching donations to educational nonprofit DonorsChoose to provide resources to teach the history and tradition of the holiday.



Photo: Panda Express

4. Build in-person experiences

Whether a retailer with a physical footprint or a digital brand exploring pop-up opportunities, adding an in-person element can better immerse customers into a new culture. Interactive displays and activities can incentivize in-store traffic, foster deeper customer relationships, and set brands apart from ecommerce-only brands, particularly Amazon.

Case study: To celebrate Juneteenth last year, True Religion partnered with Black-owned creative cultural agency Still Rising Corp. to host a panel discussion, basketball games, and musical performances at the historic Leimert Park Village in Los Angeles.







Photo: True Religion

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