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Consumers expect brands to be inclusive

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In the midst of social upheaval in the US, many marketers are striving to be more inclusive, especially as they relate to people who have been historically underrepresented, excluded, and stereotypically portrayed. By embracing and reflecting real-world diversity, marketers can build greater brand affinity and deeper customer relationships while working to effect positive change.

Many of today's consumers, especially younger demographics, LGBTQ individuals, people of color, and people with disabilities, are rewarding brands that capture diversity, share their inclusive values, and espouse causes that support social equity. "Inclusivity is increasingly expected, especially by Gen Z and millennial audiences," said Jill Estorino, president and managing director for Disney Parks International at The Walt Disney Co.

A May 2019 survey by Adobe found that 62% of US adults said diversity in a brand's advertising had at least some impact on the way they perceived that brand's products and services, with 24% reporting it had a "major" impact. More than six in 10 (61%) respondents said diversity in ads was somewhat important or very important, and 38% said they'd be more likely to trust a brand that showed diversity in its advertising.

Importance of Diversity in Advertisements According to US Adults, May 2019

% of respondents

Somewhat unimportant 6%

Not important 9%

Very important 36%

Neutral 24%

Somewhat important 25%
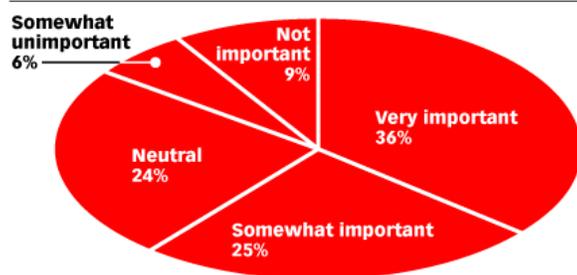
Source: Adobe, "Diversity in Advertising," June 17, 2019

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Multicultural and minority consumers react most favorably to content in which they can see themselves and their communities represented positively and realistically. In August 2019, The Female Quotient, Google, and Ipsos surveyed nearly 3,000 US consumers from diverse backgrounds in an attempt to understand the relationship between ads that were diverse and inclusive and people's behavior after seeing those ads. Respondents were asked to consider 12 attributes: gender identity, age, body type, race or ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, skin tone, language, religious or spiritual affiliation, physical ability, socioeconomic status, and overall appearance of people featured in each ad. The study found that 64% of overall respondents reported taking some type of action after seeing an ad they thought was diverse or inclusive. These percentages were significantly higher among those who were Latino (85%), Black (79%), Asian or Pacific Islander (79%); LGBTQ (85%); millennials (77%); and teens (76%).

At the other end of the spectrum, perennially noninclusive brands risk backlash from consumers who feel maligned or marginalized by them. For example, while more than one-third (34%) of US adults said they either temporarily or permanently stopped supporting brands they felt did not represent them, significantly higher percentages of LGBTQ (58%), African American (53%), and Hispanic respondents (40%) said the same, according to the Adobe survey.

While each company will ultimately forge its own path toward inclusive and accessible marketing, experts agree that some best

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practices universally apply, including diversifying and empowering marketing teams, creating experiences authentic to their audiences, asking for help, and committing to always doing better.

To learn more about how marketers can better embrace inclusion, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our recent report:

Report by Victoria Petrock Nov 05, 2020

Best Practices for Inclusive Marketing

BEST
PRACTICES
FOR INCLUSIVE
MARKETING
Reflecting and Embracing
Real-World Diversity

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