

AI-powered analysis finds progress and gaps in ad inclusivity

Article



The news: An AI-driven study of more than 1 million ads from over 100 countries found some progress on inclusivity but gaps in skin tone and gender representation, per a report from tech platform XR Extreme Reach.

The ads were analyzed using the **Representation Index (RX)**, a tool introduced by XR and The Female Quotient earlier this year to evaluate ads based on qualities including age, skin tone,

body type, and gender expression. The index uses AI to evaluate inclusivity and then assigns ads a score ranging from 0 to 100, with higher scores denoting more inclusion.

Falling short: The ads had an overall global average representation score of 32, suggesting there is significant room for improvement.

- Just 12% of people identified in the ads had dark skin tones.
- Ads globally feature masculine gender portrayals 56% of the time, compared with 44% for feminine gender expression, which could signal a missed opportunity to connect with women, who are responsible for 85% of household spending.
- Sports advertising scored a below-average 28. The 2024 Olympics score for feminine gender expression fell to 54 from 60 in 2020.

Signs of progress: Despite the low average score, advertisers made some progress.

- 70% of countries scored above the global average for ad representation.
- Charity/nonprofit groups scored highest, with an average RX of 42.
- Ads during this year's Super Bowl scored 41, 28% better than the global average.

Diversity pullback: The report comes as companies have [scaled back diversity initiatives](#) amid pressure from conservative activists. For example, **Walmart** last week announced [sweeping policy rollbacks](#), including withdrawing from a major LGBTQ+ index.

Why it matters: Even as many companies abandon diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, research consistently shows public support for them.

- Most (58%) US adults said diversity is important to business success, and 66% of workers feel DEI positively affects their workplace culture, per a 2024 [Morning Consult](#) survey.
- Forty percent of CEOs were prioritizing building DEI into their strategic goals, a July 2024 Deloitte survey found, and 30% were establishing employee resource groups for people with different identities.

With marquee events like the Super Bowl and Oscars coming up in early 2025, XR is calling on advertisers to submit their ads for scoring now to allow time to improve their inclusivity before reaching the public.

Our take: Given advertising’s power to shape values and influence trends and behavior, the XR report shows that inclusivity isn’t just an ethical imperative; it’s a sound business strategy for companies seeking to expand their reach.

Areas Related to DEI US CEOs Are Prioritizing Most Over the Next 12 Months, June 2024

% of respondents



Note: top 3 responses

Source: Deloitte and Fortune, "Summer 2024: Fortune/Deloitte CEO Survey," July 31, 2024

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