

# Inclusion is rising in consumer importance, yet video ads are looking less diverse

Article

**The trend:** Pledges to increase diversity in commercials and ads are falling short, recent studies show, even as consumers express a desire to see brands devote more efforts to

inclusion.

**On-screen slump:** Minority representation in video ads fell in 2022, per an [Extreme Reach](#) review. It found that nearly 73% of actors in ads were white last year, up from 66% in 2021. The share of people of color fell to about 26% from 35%.

- Likewise, an Ad Age [analysis of Super Bowl commercials](#) found waning progress in DEI representation for that marquee event. Of 74 celebrities the publication confirmed had appeared in this year's Big Game ad spots, 22 were Black, five were Hispanic, and none were Asian American or Pacific Islander.
- The report also noted that LGBTQ+ representation in Super Bowl ads eased since 2020.

**DEI under assault:** Diversity efforts have lost vigor and DEI initiatives are broadly under attack, a departure from companies' pledges to increase minority hiring and address broader systemic inequality in the wake of US racial unrest in 2020.

- [Proposals launched](#) in at least 12 states would curb diversity spending and change hiring guidelines at colleges and universities.

**Why it matters:** Video advertising can strongly influence attitudes and perceptions, and studies show consumers are drawn to brands that reflect their ethnicities, tastes, backgrounds, and values.

- A 2022 [survey of more than 1,000 US consumers](#) commissioned by Amazon Ads with Environics Research found that 67% felt it important that brands promote diversity and inclusion, with seven in 10 consumers saying DEI is important when choosing a brand to purchase from.

**Analyst insight:** "The consumer base, especially Gen Z shoppers, will abandon brands that fail to deliver on social commitments," said demographics analyst **Christina Obolenskaya**. "It isn't enough for brands to hop on to marketing trends during Black History or Pride Month—wider racial and gender-inclusive efforts need to be year-round considerations."

**The big takeaway:** Diversity and inclusion in advertising have become consumer must-haves, not nice-to-haves. By neglecting to include populations representing diverse hues in their ads, advertisers could contribute to reinforcing unfavorable stereotypes.

- Brands that shun DEI also risk alienating US racial and ethnic groups whose numbers and buying powers are rising. In short, they could be leaving sales on the table.

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**Diversity and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives that Are Important to Their Company According to Brand Marketers Worldwide, Jan 2022**

*% of respondents*

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Corporate social responsibility in our marketing efforts	68%
Diversity, equality, and inclusion in our marketing efforts	67%
Environmental and social governance in our marketing efforts	66%
Diversity and inclusion in the content where ads are purchased	65%
Diversity and inclusion in vendor selection	65%

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*Note: extremely/very important*

*Source: Nielsen, "2022 Annual Marketing Report," April 12, 2022*

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