

# Tapping the Differences: An Exploration of Inclusive Marketing Approach by Established Brands through Advertisements

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## ABSTRACT

In a rapidly evolving business landscape, Apple Inc. emphasizes that innovation demands diversity, advocating for companies to merge diverse perspectives for growth. Marketers hold the key to this transformation, tailoring messages for varied demographics while amplifying underrepresented voices. Unfortunately, many firms struggle to actualize their diversity goals, often employing a compliance-driven approach that yields minimal change. Effective strategies in diversity marketing have led notable brands like McDonald's, Proctor & Gamble, and Target to engage successfully with diverse markets, while inclusivity in advertising fosters community and connection through representation. Conversely, failed attempts such as PepsiCo's controversial ad and H&M's insensitive campaign highlight the pitfalls of insincerity in diversity efforts. For businesses to succeed in genuine inclusiveness, aligning diversity initiatives with corporate objectives is essential. Emphasizing educational and culturally resonant marketing will lead to authentic communication with audiences. Successful inclusive campaigns from brands like Dove, Pantene, and Nike exemplify the impact of portraying real societal diversity. By prioritizing authenticity and understanding diverse consumer preferences, brands can build lasting connections and drive engagement across various cultural segments.

**Keywords:** inclusive marketing, marketing communication,

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## INTRODUCTION

Apple Inc. asserts that "the most innovative company must also be the most diverse" (Bourke, J., Dillon, B., 2018). Diverse perspectives can inspire new ideas. The only people who can implement diversity in their businesses are marketers. In addition to helping people realize their full potential, businesses also need to cater to a wide range of customer types. Growth is made possible by diverse perspectives and experiences. Businesses need to align their "inside with the outside!" Businesses will interact with varied customers outside of their frames if they genuinely value diversity and inclusion.

Businesses must speak to people of all backgrounds in their messaging, regardless of their professional qualifications, gender, age, race, ethnicity, or religion. In addition to diversity, they must listen to the voices of underrepresented or underprivileged groups. Businesses must treat people equitably and recognize and comprehend their many identities, histories, and differences.

Additionally, in order to become completely inclusive, the majority of businesses must change their entire culture. According to research, 71% of businesses hope to create a "inclusive" culture in the future (Bourke, J., Dillon, B., 2018). However, performance levels are really quite low. Why are businesses unable to turn their goals into tangible advancements? The primary cause is that businesses usually take a compliance-focused or programmatic approach to diversity and inclusion, underestimating the extent of the change that is necessary.

Diversity marketing is used because various audiences react differently to different types of messaging. Reaching new consumers through diversity marketing has proven successful for several well-known firms.

### Example of Inclusive Marketing:

One of the best examples of inclusive marketing is Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign. Through the inclusion of women of various ages, sizes, and ethnicities, the campaign questioned conventional notions of beauty. Dove inspired women and promoted self-acceptance by showcasing true beauty.

### Benefits of Inclusive Marketing:

**Increased Brand Loyalty:** Strong relationships with a variety of audiences are facilitated by inclusive marketing, which raises consumer advocacy and brand loyalty.

**Positive Brand Perception:** Companies that welcome diversity are seen as progressive and socially conscious, which can draw in new clients and enhance their reputation.

**Improved Business Performance:** Reaching a larger audience and breaking into new markets are two ways that inclusive marketing may boost sales and revenue. By adhering to these guidelines, companies can produce strong and memorable ads that honor diversity, encourage inclusivity, and connect with viewers more deeply.

### Theoretical framework:

In order to propagate ideas and lifestyles as well as messages that encourage purchases, marketing communication, which is characterized by its persuasive nature and emphasis on financial rewards, uses pictures that represent societally accepted views and values (Galindo, 2012). As it occurs, these speeches frequently contain stereotypes and prejudices directed at minority groups, making them incompatible with the current sociocultural reality (Silva et al., 2006; Araujo, 2014).

In this regard, it should be highlighted that marketing communication plays a significant role in social responsibility and extends beyond the financial and commercial potential of product disclosure and promotion (Strozenberg, 2006; Andreoli & Vieira, 2022). Therefore, it is highlighted that marketing communication has the ability to disseminate values and beliefs as well as contribute "new other" worldviews that are better suited to the current situation (Leite, 2008, Leite, 2008a, b; Leite & Batista, 2014).

This is the exact context in which counterintuitive communication—which was first conceptualized as the “deliberate attempt to break with old stereotypes” (Fry, 2002, p. 305)—occurs when minority group representatives are portrayed in advertising discourses in a position of social prestige (Leite, 2008a, b).

By doing this, the receiver's expectations are lowered, which forces him to use critical thinking to update the knowledge he has stored up to that point (Leite, 2016). The goal of counterintuitive communication is to spark and expand social discussions, which can then affect how people see various social realities—particularly those pertaining to minority groups—as well as the attitudes, beliefs, and actions aimed toward them.

By suggesting the creation of more thoughtful, democratic, and inclusive ideals in its place, counterintuitive marketing communication enables the development of a reality that discourages and lessens social prejudices that are still prevalent. It is crucial to note that, while preserving commercial and lucrative marketing interests, paradoxical communication can embrace the potential of social responsibility and even go beyond what is considered "politically correct" (Leite, 2008a, b, 2017).

Since the received message is more easily registered and recalled when it deviates from intuition's expectations, counterintuitive communication's larger potential for memory by the receiving audience stands out in relation to its commercial purpose (Leite, 2016).

Furthermore, the organization's strategy for responding to the socio-historical circumstances may be regarded as breaking paradigms in the marketing discourse, which positions itself favorably for the representation of social minorities (Praxedes, et.al. 2016).

A recent mapping by Andreoli and Vieira (2022) noted that despite its significance, academic literature has yet to fully examine paradoxical communication. It became evident from this work that there is still a dearth of empirical research on the subject and that the body of knowledge on the subject is primarily theoretical in nature.

Only one paper using a hypothetical-deductive approach was found among the latter; nevertheless, it had limitations with regard to the confirmation of the hypotheses and the final findings. Furthermore, it was found that the exploration of paradoxical communication was limited to the study of racial issues, specifically those pertaining to the Black race.

However, it should be mentioned that the inclusion of LGBTQIAPb representation has been examined from a wide range of perspectives and outside the purview of paradoxical communication research. Under the umbrella of "outvertising," which refers to advertising that is "out of the closet," studies range from the idea of departing from merely traditional marketing communication by incorporating causes (Kautish, 2010; Covaleski, 2019) to more focused analyses of these insertions (Mozdzinski, 2020).

According to the author, outvertising is a more inclusive and pro-diversity advertising movement that has emerged recently. It may be deconstructionist (Rodrigues & Zanin, 2014) or paradoxical (Leite, 2014). It is evident from the definition that the subjects covered here are highly aligned.

Even so, there are still not many studies that use an experimental approach to examine how consumers perceive these marketing communications in terms of reception, processing, evaluation, and reaction (Cunningham & Melton, 2014; Read, van Driel & Potter, 2018; Shepherd, Chartrand & Fitzsimons, 2019).

However, neither a comparative synthesis of the results of the aforementioned research nor their own internal conflicts, which occasionally attested to better evaluation and other times not (Read et al., 2018), demonstrated convergence.

In this regard, there is a significant research deficit in the field of LGBTQIAPb cause representation, particularly with regard to the efficacy of consumer behavior and paradoxical marketing communication. This disparity is also visible in the organizational setting, where this public is underrepresented.

The most recent Todxs study, conducted in 2020, raised concerns about this methodology by revealing that only 1.3% of television ads and advertising posts nationwide had LGBTQIAPb characters.

Elife and SA36 Agency studied over 2,000 ads from 50 big businesses on Instagram and Facebook in 2020 and found only 3% had LGBTQIAPb indication or representation.

The data shows that the LGBTQIAP population has substantial purchasing power and expresses itself through their consumption. According to a survey conducted by corporate consultancy firm LGBT Capital, the consumption of this audience totaled around \$3.6 trillion worldwide in 2018, with Brazil accounting for nearly \$107 billion (Oliveira, 2019).

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The justification is the concern of organizations aligning themselves with the LGBTQIAPb cause because to the fraction of more conservative, non-sympathetic consumers (Praxedes, 2019; Zago Junior et al., 2019). This was even corroborated by empirical data in a recent experiment conducted by Andreoli and Batista (2021), in which customer behavior was found to be more negative toward the inclusion of a homosexual pair than a heterosexual couple in a Close Up advertisement. Following the debate, three hypotheses were developed regarding paradoxical communication with LGBTQIAP and its impact on implantation.

Counterintuitive communication with the LGBTQIAPb cause, represented by a prominent homosexual couple, is projected to be better assessed than standard (intuitive) contact with a heterosexual pair. This improved appraisal should occur both in terms of emotional response to the advertisement and willingness to share the message and purchase the offered product. Furthermore, respondents are likely to have a more positive impression of marketing communication's involvement in social responsibility.

## OBJECTIVES

### Research Objectives:

1. Understanding the concept of Inclusive marketing
2. Identifying marketing initiatives by the brands for inclusive marketing

### 3. Analysing the marketing communication by the brands for Inclusive marketing

Here's an exploration of how brands can leverage inclusive marketing through advertisements:

#### 1. Authentic Representation:

- **Showcasing Diversity:** Brands should feature a diverse range of individuals in their advertising to reflect the multicultural world we live in. This includes people of different races, ethnicities, genders, ages, abilities and body types.
- **Avoiding Stereotypes:** It is essential to avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes and portraying people as complex and multifaceted individuals. This helps to challenge societal norms and promote inclusion.

#### 2. Inclusive Language:

- **Gender-Neutral Language:** Brands should use gender-neutral language in their advertisements to avoid excluding anyone. This can be achieved by using inclusive pronouns like "they/them" or addressing individuals directly.
- **Avoiding Ableist Language:** It is important to be mindful of language that may be offensive or discriminatory towards people with disabilities. It is important to use person-centred language and avoid derogatory terms.

#### 3. Cultural Sensitivity:

- **Understanding Diverse Cultures:** The brand needs to explore and understand the cultural hue of the target audience. This helps to avoid cultural misunderstandings and create culturally related ads.
- **Collaborating with Diverse Voices:** Involving people from different backgrounds in the creative process ensures that advertising is authentic and respectful of different cultures.

#### 4. Amplifying Underrepresented Voices:

- **Giving a Platform to Marginalized Groups:** Brands can use their platforms to amplify the voices of marginalized groups and raise awareness of social issues, either through partnerships with relevant organizations or by featuring underrepresented individuals in their advertising.

#### 5. Creating Inclusive Experiences:

- **Accessible Advertising:** It's critical to make sure ads are accessible to individuals with impairments. This covers the use of alternative text for photos, audio descriptions, and closed captions.
- **Inclusive Storytelling:** A sense of connection and belonging can be promoted by telling stories that appeal to a variety of audiences. This can be accomplished by using a variety of characters and plots that are based on actual events.

The following businesses have effectively expanded into new demographic markets by utilizing diversity and inclusive marketing:

(Marketing Schools, 2019) • McDonald's has conducted a great deal of market research on ethnic viewpoints and how they affect communication in the general public. One of their well-known investments is the "I'm Loving It" campaign.

- Procter and Gamble has made significant investments in the black community, and advertisements for brands like Pantene, Tide, and Oil of Olay frequently highlight black families—and dads in particular—that appeal to African-American consumers.

- In a similar vein, Target has produced ads that portray black families in accordance with their own principles and beliefs rather than stereotypes or popular culture representations. • Saturn has made an effort to connect with the LGBT community by supporting LGBT-focused events and creating ads that speak to their ideals, such as "Does your ride reflect your pride?"
- By developing courses to teach women to ride, Harley Davidson began marketing to women.
- Marketing to varied racial and cultural groups is so crucial to AT&T that the company has an executive position dedicated solely to these kinds of efforts.
- By showcasing women of different ages, colors, shapes, and sizes in their inclusive campaign, Dove questioned the beauty industry's ideal of beauty.
- Coca-Cola is so successful at advertising that it's easy to forget one of its most straightforward themes. The theme of its 2017 Super Bowl commercial was "together, we are beautiful." A diverse group of people sang different parts of the patriotic song "America the Beautiful." Beginning in English and with parts performed in Hindi and Arabic, the song also showed images of a Latino family, a gay 116 couple, ladies dressed in traditional Middle Eastern clothing, and Jewish men wearing yarmulkes.
- Guinness' Wheelchair Basketball: Guinness highlighted people who require the aid of mobility equipment, addressing another demographic that is sometimes disregarded in conventional advertising. Designed to resemble a bunch of pals playing wheelchair basketball, the commercial eventually reveals that only one of the men truly need the device. "Friendship," the spot, concluded with the group wrapping up their game and going out for drink together. However, there have been instances where businesses have failed to highlight diversity or inclusion. They include, among others: (Robinson, K., 2018)
- The 2017 PepsiCo commercial, in which Kendall Jenner hands a can of the well-known soft drink to a police officer. The commercial trivialized significant social justice movements, according to many, and as a result of the protests and social media outcry that followed, PepsiCo decided to remove it completely and apologize.
- The notorious "Beach Body Ready" advertisement from Protein World featured a bikini-clad lady asking, "Are you beach body ready?" It drew immediate criticism from the public, with 60,000 people signing an online petition demanding that the advertisement be taken down. There was such widespread indignation that some people even vandalized the advertisements, adding footnotes like "Each body's ready" and "You are fine as you are."
- In 2018, the well-known clothing retailer H&M angered millions of people with a contentious children's advertising campaign that featured an African American boy wearing a hood with a racist phrase.

The top names in the world, such as Diddy and LeBron James, criticized H&M for this blatant instance of needless diversity marketing, which surely hurt the company's reputation among a wide range of ethnic groups.

Putting diversity and inclusion in marketing into practice has proven to be far more challenging than expected, as these few examples demonstrate. Why is this the case? Where are businesses going wrong?

First of all, it appears that far too many businesses commit the basic mistake of not matching their diversity policies with their corporate objectives. And in these circumstances, the harsh reality of managing the business on a daily basis, keeping customers delighted, and selling and delivering the product or service will continue to undermine the concept of diversity, regardless of how much good will there may be toward it.

Furthermore, there is frequently a discrepancy in how companies create and execute diversity policy. In other words, what appears to be good on paper too frequently fails in reality.

What steps must businesses take, then, to ensure diversity and inclusion in their operations? Making sure that businesses are diverse is an important first step in ensuring that various viewpoints are represented both at the beginning and throughout campaigns.

Additionally, education and information are crucial, and marketers should exercise caution when doing market research to make sure that the participants represent the increasingly diverse world.

Adapting the brand's message to the target is essential for in-culture marketing to be successful and effective. This means conducting market research to ascertain the target consumer's values, communication preferences, and purchasing patterns prior to creating an advertising campaign.

As the campaign progresses, businesses must think about how it seems, sounds, and reads from a different angle. To get more information, this may involve focus groups, A/B testing, or creative testing inside the campaign.

Ultimately, having a real tale is preferable to imposing variety. Lacy (2017) Diversity marketing does not always need that different societal segments be featured in every single commercial. However, it is important that marketing be truthful and reflect society.

Brands are increasingly using inclusive marketing to connect with a diverse spectrum of consumers and foster a sense of community. Brands that value individuality and embrace diversity can create meaningful ads that engage consumers more deeply.

## METHODS

**Advertisements practicing Inclusive Marketing:** Campaigns that promote diversity and inclusivity by showcasing individuals from a range of backgrounds—including different colors, ethnicities, genders, ages, skills, and body types—are known as inclusive marketing ads. By promoting individuality and dispelling preconceptions, these commercials hope to foster a feeling of community and connection with a larger audience.

Brands that have effectively used inclusive marketing include the following examples:

### Dove's "Real Beauty" Campaign:



[Opens in a new window](#)  [advertisingvietnam.com](https://advertisingvietnam.com)

Dove's Real Beauty Campaign

Through the inclusion of women of various ages, sizes, and nationalities, this landmark campaign questioned conventional notions of beauty. Dove inspired women and promoted self-acceptance by showcasing true beauty.

(Source: <https://prezi.com/fnhewg7-x5kb/the-dove-campaign-for-real-beauty/>)

### Pantene's "Hair Has No Gender" Campaign:



[Opens in a new window](#)  [campaignsoftheworld.com](https://campaignsoftheworld.com)

Pantene's Hair Has No Gender Campaign

By showcasing individuals of various genders with a variety of hairstyles, this ad questioned gender norms. Pantene promotes the notion that everyone should feel beautiful and confident, and that hair is gender neutral.

(Source: <https://campaignsoftheworld.com/film-and-video/hair-has-no-gender-by-pantene/>)



### Nike's "Find Your Greatness" Campaign:



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[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYP9AGtLvRg)

Nike's Find Your Greatness Campaign

Athletes of diverse abilities, including wheelchair users and amputees, participated in this initiative. Nike pushed everyone to discover their own greatness despite any physical restrictions and appreciated the diversity of athletes.

(Source: <https://youtu.be/WYP9AGtLvRg?feature=shared>)

### Sephora's "We Belong to Something Beautiful" Campaign:



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[www.sephora.com.au](https://www.sephora.com.au)

Sephora's We Belong to Something Beautiful Campaign

People of many races, ethnicities, and genders were featured in this ad, which emphasized diversity and inclusiveness. By highlighting the beauty of variety, Sephora fostered a feeling of community and belonging.

(Source: <https://wwd.com/feature/sephora-we-belong-to-something-beautiful-inclusivity-campaign-1203138304/>)

These are only some instances of inclusive marketing ads that have had a big influence. Brands can develop more relevant and meaningful advertisements that appeal to a larger audience by embracing diversity and inclusivity. include the following:

Table 1: Examples of inclusive marketing

Coca-Cola's "Hilltop" commercial	More than 100,000 letters praised a 1971 commercial that showcased a diverse group of individuals singing together for being inclusive.
Gillette's shaving experience ad	A ad that followed a trans male kid and his father as they experienced shaving for the first time
Etsy's "Gift Like You Mean It" campaign	A 2020 holiday ad showing a same-sex couple spending Christmas with relatives
Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty	A campaign that featured women of various ages, shapes, and sizes in order to promote body positivity
Microsoft's "We All Win Campaign"	An advertisement from 2018 demonstrating how users with disabilities could utilize the Xbox Adaptive Controller
Purple Goat and Strong bow's collaboration	A campaign that included representation of people with disabilities in print and digital media, accessible events, and other channels

Calvin Klein	A company that switched from pencil-thin, white models to plus-sized, black LGBTQ+ models
Victoria's Secret	A company that started using transgender models and models with larger bodies
TikTok	A company that started using transgender models and models with larger bodies

**Following are some more examples of inclusive marketing campaigns by established brands:**

**1.Cadbury: Sign with Fingers Big & Small:** Cadbury Fingers sets a good example with its campaign, "Finger Gestures, Big and Small". Working with respected deaf author and consultant Rebecca A. Withey and members of the deaf community, Cadbury Fingers shed light on a phenomenon known as "dinner table syndrome". The inadvertent exclusion of deaf people from everyday conversations inspired the 30-second advert, in which a young girl describes her experience of being excluded from conversations around her, in British Sign Language (BSL).

Cadbury Fingers has blacked out some of the on-screen subtitles, highlighting the frustration and sense of isolation felt by many in the community. The campaign not only acts as a powerful call to action to educate the public about BSL, but also serves as a reminder of the importance of inclusivity in marketing. By actively involving the deaf community in the project, Cadbury Fingers ensures an authentic presentation that resonates with its target audience.

**2.Djerf Avenue:** In the realm of fashion, where diversity and inclusivity have become increasingly crucial, Djerf Avenue emerges as a trailblazer, setting a new standard for size inclusivity. This innovative brand has made a bold commitment to showcasing size diversity in all its glory across every facet of its collection both on their website and social. A distinctive feature of their approach is their dedication to allowing customers to see each garment on a variety of body types. This forward-thinking strategy allows individuals to find their perfect fit and see themselves reflected as valued Djerf Avenue customers. The brand held an innovative comprehensive fashion show in New York, presented by people with disabilities. This innovative demonstration not only emphasizes diversity and intersection as an important factor in their brand's identity, but also to a certain number of physics that releases traditional beauty standards.

**3.Maybelline:** In recent years, makeup brands have had to catch up with the global awareness of different skin tones. As part of its efforts to be more inclusive, Maybelline has added 16 shades to its Fit Me Foundation, making its product lineup more accessible to people with a range of skin tones. But it wasn't just about skin tones. Maybelline uses its social media profiles to celebrate cultural moments that celebrate diversity. For example, in celebration of Pride Month, the company posted photos of icons of the LGBTQ+ community in New York City to Instagram.

During Pride Month and Black History Month, Maybelline strategically tagged various influencers in its social media posts. This act not only amplifies the voices of these creators, but also acknowledges and celebrates their unique perspectives. In this way, Maybelline fosters an environment of inclusivity and authentic representation and reaffirms its commitment to diversity.





(Source: <https://www.glamour.com/story/maybelline-fit-me-foundations-more-shades>)

## RESULTS

Previous research on diversity and inclusivity in advertising shows that showing more diverse and inclusive representation in brand communication affects consumer's perceptions and values toward the brand (Friberg & Jacobsson, 2021). Not only that, but according to other research, presenting various ethnic and racial groups in brand communication might be an effective way of more inclusive messaging for the benefit of customer well-being and marketing success (Licsandru & Cui, 2018).

In general, social inclusion refers to a society in which everyone has the skills, opportunity, and resources to engage in the economy and their community (Merrilees et al., 2014). The 'inclusion' attitude goes beyond the concept of 'some' and shifts the group effort to the phrase 'all' while accounting for diversity. In practice, it involves creating an atmosphere that improves the motivation, contentment, and commitment of various people (April and Blass, 2010).

The goal of this study is to determine whether brand experience from BLP Beauty's inclusive marketing initiatives influences brand trust, brand image, and brand love, as well as whether BLP Beauty brand image from inclusive marketing influences brand trust, brand love, and brand loyalty. The data for the aim was collected through quantitative research using the survey method. The data collected was examined using descriptive statistics and the PLS-SEM approach.

Finally, in his study, the researcher not only evaluates the relationship and influence of brand experience, image, trust, love, and loyalty in BLP Beauty inclusive marketing, but also makes recommendations for any beauty industry, particularly makeup brands, looking to incorporate inclusive marketing into their marketing strategy. According to the research, BLP Inclusive Marketing experience influences customer relationships with brands, particularly in terms of brand image, trust, and love. However, brand trust is insufficient to persuade customers to be loyal to the brand.

As a result, the study advised BLP Beauty to hold an offline inclusive marketing event while also increasing product diversity. Not only that, but deeper research into other brands and industries is encouraged. In conclusion, inclusive marketing is an excellent technique for BLP Beauty to build consumer brand relationships. Recently, several corporations have targeted a typical consumer: white, heterosexual, middle-class, white-collar Christians. (Hendricks, B. 2019).

According to Dimitrieska et al. (2019), in order to make diversity and inclusion a reality, businesses must continuously change their marketing strategies to remain competitive and up to date on the latest trends and

technologies. Similarly, marketers should monitor how their target market evolves and changes over time. Companies should consider if their operations reflect the communities and customers they serve.

Diversity is vital not only for corporate responsibility, but also for survival in an increasingly diverse market. Furthermore, diverse firms outperform homogeneous organizations in terms of marketing and sales to various audiences. Some key takeaways and findings are as follows: Consumers identify with companies because they recognize the people who feature in advertisements and messaging. They relate to a brand because it accurately represents their race, gender, ethnicity, and culture. Isolating clients by just showing one sort of person when a brand appeals to a wide range of demographics can be just as destructive as indiscriminately incorporating diversity into marketing.

## DISCUSSION

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## Conclusion:

Inclusive marketing is now talk of the town. The paper concludes that the Inclusive Marketing is practiced by all the established and reputed brands. There are certain advertising campaigns carried out to include the neglected sectors. Complexion differences, gender biases, differently abled sections or societal stereotypes are addressed through the advertisements. They are successfully practiced for very common products like shampoo, chocolates, cosmetic products and many more.

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