



Why Diversity in Marketing Matters

WYLIE & CO.

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Diversity is a hot-button issue.

The country is moving towards a more multicultural environment, with diverse audiences possessing significant buying power. It's important for brands and marketers to recognize this immense potential. Embracing diversity is not only the right thing to do; it's also the best decision you can make for your business.

Ignoring diversity means you're leaving money on the table.

While many brands recognize they should be embracing diverse audiences, there is also a disconnect in the "how" of it. No one wants to feel like they're being exploited at the hands of some marketing department; instead, we want that head-nod experience of feeling like we authentically belong to a larger community. How do you walk this fine line as a business owner?



WITHIN THE NEXT 5 YEARS,
MULTICULTURAL CLIENTS WILL DRIVE
86% OF THE TOTAL GROWTH
ON SPENDING IN RETAIL.
IF YOU LOOK AT GROWTH WITHOUT THESE GROUPS,
YOU ARE ONLY ADDRESSING 10% OF THE GROWTH.



Bridging the Gap

Marketing is now a two-way street.

Social media has the amazing power of allowing us to build online communities and start conversations. It's not enough to push your message out to your target audience; you must also recognize that once the message gets out there, it will get interpreted and re-interpreted by your community. Your supporters, your influencers, and even your detractors will begin to create your message for you.

It's important that you're authentically engaging with all members of your online community so that you have a good handle on your brand's message and image. Your brand is more than just a product or service; it's an important part of your customer's everyday lifestyle.

Creating an inclusive community goes a long way in getting your consumers invested in your product.

"PEER INFLUENCE

IS MORE IMPORTANT TO CUSTOMERS...
AND WHILE CONTENT IS IMPORTANT,
IT NEEDS TO BE CONTENT AT THE RIGHT TIME
AND ON THE RIGHT PLATFORM
SO THE CONTEXTUAL ELEMENT COMES INTO PLAY."

HUBSPOT'S CEO BRIAN HALLIGAN



INCLUSION: A 3-STEP FRAMEWORK

1. Respect. Find the human universals

- Stories
- Culture
- Language
- History
- Struggles
- Successes

2. Reframe. Expand your exemplars

- Don't go after the easy or the obvious - jokes, imagery, lists, choices, keynote speakers
- Behind every metric, stat, lead, initiative, campaign are people

3. Repeat. Repeated efforts get noticed

- Creates a welcome environment
- Demonstrates your brand's values
- Gets respect from diverse audiences

How to Create an Authentic, Inclusive Community

1. DO find a natural fit

Tommy Hilfiger was recently quoted as saying that he made the mistake of chasing a trend when he changed his marketing to cater primarily to urban hip-hop culture. Because of this, he forgot what his brand was truly about, and when influencers in the hip-hop community abandoned Hilfiger in favor of creating their own brands, he was left with a severely altered brand and no one to sell it to. Hilfiger's problem was that he didn't approach his marketing in an authentic way. He equated hip-hop with African-American and went after that population, rather than looking for the people of color who would have worn his clothes or been attracted to his clothes in the first place.

Don't force your round brand into a square hole. Look for a natural fit.

How to Create an Authentic, Inclusive Community

2. DON'T flip-flop

Unfortunately, building an inclusive audience can sometimes be met with criticism or ignorance. Stand strong in your conviction.

A recent Honeywell commercial drew sharp criticism for including same-sex couples. Instead of backpedaling or softening their stance, Honeywell released another commercial, doubling down on their position that love is love.

3. DO go where your audience is

Develop different strategies to approach your online community members. For example, African-American, Latino, and Asian-American users make up 41% of Twitter's total United States user base – more than 54 million users in the U.S. The size and diversity of this user base open up an opportunity for brands to communicate directly with consumers and prospects on Twitter with a much higher rate of engagement. Instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach, brands can now create different strategies to attract different types of consumers, using the tools and platforms already familiar to those consumers.

How to Create an Authentic, Inclusive Community

4. DON'T make sweeping generalizations

HBO recently created a hip-hop mix-tape for Game of Thrones in an attempt to get more African-American viewers. While it may have seemed like a no-brainer to HBO marketing execs, the campaign ended up feeling awkward and forced. It gained a lot of buzz – most of it negative – but it probably did nothing to increase the number of minority viewers. A better strategy would have been to approach influencers within the “Blerd” (or Black Nerd) space who are already ardent GOT fans and collaborate with them on the best campaigns for introducing a different target audience to the show.

5. DO walk your talk:

Attracting new, diverse and inclusive audiences to your community has to be more than just a ploy for more profits. Consumers are savvy and can smell an inauthentic campaign from a mile away. If you are committed to creating a more diverse online community around your brand, show it. Hire with this goal in mind, talk to diverse communities, and get different people with diverse ideas involved within your community and your company.

It all starts from the inside.

Start Small with What You Have

Remember, all that's needed is that simple head nod. Perhaps it's using more diverse imagery in your advertising and branding or specifically reaching out to influencers within a more diverse population who are already using your product.

Focus on building your community of thriving fans.

Focus on their needs and wants.

Focus on who is already using your products and why.

And then communicate with them in exactly the way they want to be spoken to.

Speak in their language. Speak in their terms. Invite them on in.

CONTACT US

Thanks for following along! We hope you enjoyed our primer on creating an authentic, inclusive community. If you have any questions about the topics we covered or our process, just shoot us [an email](#).

Need more information? Sign up for our monthly newsletter, [Digital Discourse](#).

You can also sign-up for a [free consult](#) anytime. Thanks!