

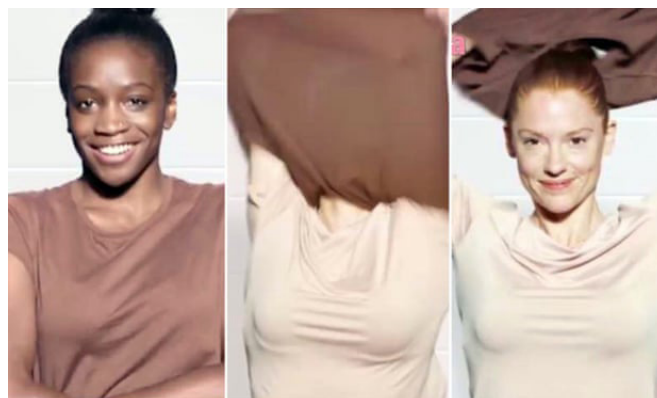
When will advertising embrace diversity, gender and race equality and start reflecting the real world?

Graphic design within advertisements helps build the world around us by perpetuating societal/cultural norms and standards, it can be the difference between becoming progressive and embracing or close-minded and stereotypical. "The portrayal of women in advertising is a prolific research topic and extant studies have emphasized the negative attitudes of female consumers toward stereotypic depictions of women in advertising in general." (Grau and Zotos, 2016).

Gender and race inequality in advertising has been a constant pandemic, which is psychologically affecting people, including depression, anxiety and other serious, sometimes debilitating conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders (American Psychological Association, 2020). Commercial advertisements contribute to the inequality and suggest subtle prejudices, there are 1990s television commercials still visible to this day that tend to portray White men as powerful, white women as sex objects, African American men as aggressive, and African American women as inconsequential, exaggerating cultural differences and denying positive emotions. (Browne, 1998). Embracing diversity and equality through advertisements would increase self-esteem, acceptance and change people's lives for the future, contributing towards the end of discrimination.

NPR the broadcasting & media production company distributed a survey asking people if the future of racism will fade away when old bigots die? More than 80% said the next generation wouldn't push out racism. "The further we get away from the idea that one skin color or race is better than the other, the better. Past generations had these ideas, and they were spread to the next generation and the next" (Donella, 2017).

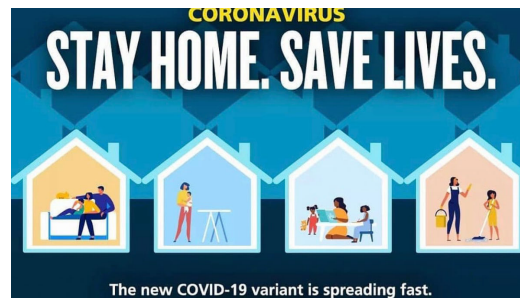
No diversity in modeling/makeup, clothes campaigns suggest issues such as anorexia, body dysmorphia, and other psychological effects, A study from men's fashion suggested that participants expressed body anxiety and negative perceptions of advertisements when they viewed idealized models when asked about the physical traits within themselves and idealized models they rejected muscularity as a symbol of masculinity and wanted to see more diverse models in fashion advertising. (Barry, 2014). In 2017 Dove the cosmetic company released a Facebook advert, promoting body lotion later admitting they "missed the mark". The advert showed a black woman removing her top to reveal a white woman underneath supposedly after using Dove body lotion. The white woman then removes her top and turns into a Middle Eastern woman. (Slawson, 2021)



(Dove body lotion facebook ad, 2017)

The presence of racial diversity in simulation product advertisements needs to be changed to better represent the diverse population. Manikins within catalogues/brochures were examined, a total of 2035 body parts and 395 full-sized manikins, 94% were White and 6% were Black, a disproportionate representation of the population. Changing the presence of diversity in the media would increase self-esteem and further increase more inclusive learning environments. (Foronda, Baptiste, Ockimey, 2017)

In recent events within the coronavirus, more informative designs are missing the mark, the government withdraws 'sexist' stay home advert stereotyping women, the image showed women homeschooling children and doing domestic chores, while the only man featured was relaxing on a sofa. Three scenes showed women cleaning, ironing, and teaching children, stereotyping women as solely responsible for cleaning up the mess while the man relaxes. (BBC News. 2021).



(BBC News. 2021)

A charity campaign for equal rights named the Fawcett Society found the pandemic was having a “devastating” effect on gender equality in the workplace, with women more likely than men to lose their jobs or be left dealing with childcare and less than four in ten women in the UK believe the Government is focusing on issues that matter most to them. (Fawcett Society, 2021).

In 2014, Burger King launched a new pride advertisement in favour of the LGTBQ community, the ‘Be your way’ campaign, which was a play on the 40-year-old tagline ‘Have it your way,’ and the Proud Whopper. Customers had been enjoying the same flame-grilled Whopper since 1957. So, what set it apart from the rest? It included a unique message for BK customers on its rainbow-colored wrapper: “We are all the same inside.”



(Burger King, 2014)

When consumers asked how this Whopper differed from a typical burger during Sunday's pride march, cashiers simply replied, “I don't know.” The secret was exposed when customers bit into the rainbow-colored wrapper and tasted the burger: nothing about it is different, nothing at all. The interior of the wrapper includes a second statement that emphasises the point: “We Are All the Same Inside.” (Steinmetz, 2014).

On the day of the 2014 Pride Parade, cameras rolled to film responses to the burger's debut. Not surprise, Burger King's pride campaign, the Proud Whopper, and its distinctive messaging elicited strong reactions—poignant and powerful moments for the business and its customers. The younger customers' reaction was largely positive, forceful, and emotional, the target group was 18 to 24-year-olds. "Burger King restaurants have always been places to eat delicious cuisine, let your guard down, and be yourself without fear of being judged," says the author.

BK's video capturing the audience's reactions gained 7 million views across all social media channels. To date, the YouTube video has earned over 5.3 million views. The Burger King McLamore Foundation, which grants scholarships to LGBT high school students, received proceeds from the franchise's sales.

Burger King not only took a statement on a significant social issue, but it also communicated with its target demographic of 18- to 24-year-olds. According to the Google Consumer Survey, today's young millennials—47 percent of consumers under the age of 24—are more likely to support a company after viewing an equality-themed ad (compared to 30 percent of all age groups combined). (Snyder, 2015) And that's a great example of valuing differences.



"The racist" is a fictitious character. Always evasive. No one admits to being one. There doesn't appear to be a face on it. But, oh, my God, do we hear it. Especially when it comes to social media. It rang out once more as Sainsbury's press officers were pierced by the double-edged blade of trending Twitter this week, for both good and bad reasons.

The supermarket's decision to display a black family celebrates the diversity of Britishness in the twenty-first century. Being black and British hasn't suddenly become mutually exclusive. Rather, many people's discomfort at being confronted with that fact is part of a larger issue that has been simmering for decades: the idea that racism does not exist in the United Kingdom. a mixed-race family

The clip shows an all-black family preparing to celebrate the annual holiday together in a series of home videos, as the daughter shares a phone call with her father where they reminisce over past Christmases and debate gravy-making skills.

The situation was, however, the polar opposite. As comedian Funmbi Omotayo described it, "all hell broke loose" after the commercial went national.

Customers should boycott Sainsbury's, according to some social media users, who accuse the store of 'virtue signalling' and being 'divisive' by not portraying a mixed family. (Sainsbury, 2020)

“You might as well rebrand yourself Blackbury’s,” “Where are the British people?” and “You’ve managed to utterly alienate the few remaining White consumers you had,” are just a few examples of replies.

A black family, it appears, is not deserving of a Christmas commercial. As a result, it begs the question of what exactly a black family is deserving of. (The Independent, 2021)

Others commended the grocer for the advertisement, claiming they can relate to the family’s Christmas traditions.

‘I personally love this ad. It feels SUPER British with all the tacky decorations and the 90s/ 00s colour grading, it’s low budget - just the way all our Christmases are gonna be this year & it’s about FAMILY & FOOD which is literally all I care about at Christmas,’ wrote one.

Another said: “This is an ad for gravy mate. They didn’t hire white people, that’s the only different. If it were only white people, would you be thinking that POC couldn’t buy Sainsbury’s gravy? no. Shows how alienated you feel when you don’t see yourself. Imagine it was like that all the time.’ (Sainsbury, 2020)

In the United Kingdom, advertising are now officially prohibited from using gender stereotypes to sell products and is seen as illegal.

The prohibition was issued in December by the Advertising Standards Authority in the United Kingdom, with a six-month grace period before it took effect. That declaration came after the ASA released a 64-page report citing public opinion and several experts on how gender stereotypes in ads “may contribute to unequal gender outcomes in public and private elements of people’s lives.” (Depictions, Perceptions and Harm A report on gender stereotypes in advertising, 2018)

A series of widely panned advertising in the United Kingdom triggered the study, including those for a Protein World weight loss drink advertised with the tagline “Are you beach body ready?” ... a commercial for baby formula that depicted a girl growing up to be a ballerina and a boy growing up to be a mathematician. (See also Kate Upton’s Game of War ad. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHskC7JRL9M>) It also follows the ASA’s decision to fine Gucci for using “unhealthily thin” models in a 2016 ad campaign, as well as a broader public concern about the harmful impacts of advertising, particularly on youngsters. (Gucci ad banned over ‘unhealthily thin’ model, 2022)



“Advertisements must not feature gender stereotypes that are likely to cause injury, or serious or widespread offence,” according to the new guideline, which gives several instances. Advertisements are not allowed to depict men or women “failing to achieve a task specifically because of their gender” (e.g. a man’s inability to change nappies; a woman’s inability to park a car”), depict “stereotypical personality traits” for boys and girls, or suggest that new mothers “should prioritise their looks or home cleanliness over their emotional health.”

This new law also prohibits commercials that “connect physical attributes with success in the romantic or social realms,” which is unconnected to gender stereotypes.

It also does not prohibit the depiction of women or men undertaking stereotypical tasks (e.g., women shopping or men doing at-home construction projects). Advertisements can still be targeted based on gender. Ads can still depict “glamorous, attractive, successful, aspirational, or healthy individuals or lifestyles,” according to the rule’s clarification. (Gender stereotypes have been banned from British ads. What does that mean?, 2022)

Many feminists have since pushed for substantive equality, a definition of equality that measures equality in terms of results and applies policy remedies that at times need treating groups differently and at other times necessitate treating them the same, in order to extend the scope of inclusion. The 1984 Royal Commission on Equality in Job was based on this latter understanding of equality, which affected the establishment of Canadian legislative tools to address employment discrimination. ¹³ As a result of this commission, the Employment Equity Act of 1986 mandated applicable firms to collect and disclose data for target groups¹⁴, as well as examine formal and informal policies and procedures, with the goal of reducing systematic barriers. ¹⁵

The study reported here is not the first of its kind; other studies have looked at the impact of diversity in commercials on brand perception. Adobe, a well-known digital marketing company, conducted a study of over 2,000 people around the world to discover if customer demand for more personalisation and personalised adverts was still as high as it was in 1994. The organisation looked at how diversity is offered and targeted across decades, genders, ethnicities, and sexual orientations in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to determine if it correlates with brand advocacy and consumer involvement.

According to Adobe, the majority of Americans (61%) value diversity in advertising, 38 percent are more likely to trust firms that feature greater diversity in their ads, and 34 percent have boycotted a brand because their identity was not represented in its advertising. “To put things in perspective, consider that over a third of LGBTQ+, African American, and Millennial consumers answered [that exhibiting more diversity in commercials] had an impact on their probability to acquire products/services from a brand,” according to Adobe (Despite 25 years of ad growth, diversity remains a challenge., 2019). In other words, a company’s willingness to embrace diversity in its marketing strategies can affect sales.

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It is undeniable that advertising has changed over time. However, our research has shown us how far we still have to go. More importantly, it has given us tremendous insight into how we can address the current lack of diversity and inclusion in advertising.

Individual and group views, methods of thinking, and behaviours can all be influenced by advertising and marketing. Because children and their families are continually exposed to advertising and media, marketing messages that are diverse and inclusive can have a substantial positive impact on children and adolescents.

Stereotyping in advertising and marketing, on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, disability, family structure, and many other aspects of identity, is still prevalent and can be damaging, hurting children's confidence, aspirations, and health, particularly mental health. Discriminatory stereotypes can also create harm by limiting possibilities for all children, particularly underprivileged and excluded children, to live a life of dignity.

Gender stereotypes can limit girls' agency and hinder their educational and economic chances. It may limit males' involvement in family life and raise their proclivity for gender-based violence.

Other forms of negative stereotyping, such as those based on race, ethnicity, or disability, have harmful consequences for children and frequently overlap with other risks. Racial and ethnic prejudice, for example, has been connected to poverty, lower educational achievement and completion, and higher school dropout rates, which are especially high among girls with disabilities. Promoting positive portrayal through the marketing and advertising of children's products and content is an important aspect of achieving equality and inclusion.

At the heart of promoting inclusive cultures you can say is undoubtedly the responsibility of leadership and management. All leaders and managers should play a role in proactively driving diversity and inclusion, but companies must also give them the tools to do so.

Why do you think diversity and inclusion have become so important now? And how can organisations ensure they are responding appropriately now, so they are prepared for future trends and situations that have not even happened yet? Promoting diversity is the first step to more than just "tolerance," but to true integration and acceptance. By increasing contact with people who are not like us and communicating with them, we can learn to deal with differences in such a way that they are not a problem. (O'Boyle, 2020)

Hopefully these can be the first steps to diminish the misconceptions and prejudices that fuel discrimination.

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