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**What are the key diversity and inclusion challenges facing marketers today?**

According to [the 2018 Accenture Holiday Shopping survey](https://www.agilitypr.com/pr-news/public-relations/millennials-will-spend-big-with-inclusion-conscious-retailers-this-holiday/), 70% of millennials are more inclined to select a given brand over another if it focuses on diversity and inclusion when it comes to promotions and offers.

Today it’s commonplace to see advertisements prominently featuring diverse faces—whether they’re multiracial, LGBT, disabled, or members of another formerly under-recognized group.

But there’s more to contemporary marketing than mimicking a 1990s United Colors of Benneton ad. What are the key diversity and inclusion challenges facing marketers today?

First of all, what’s the difference between diversity and inclusion? *Diversity* is recognizing that many types of people constitute our society. *Inclusion* entails making them feel welcome, like they’re part of the family.

Do your market research. Who is your target audience? Just don’t focus of current demographics—how are future demographics likely to change? And don’t necessarily exclude anyone in your marketing—they’re potential customers. Also, if you’re targeting a certain group—whether they’re black, Latino, LGBT, you name it—dig deeper and learn what they’re *really* looking for, not what you *think* they’re seeking.

When it comes to *diversity* marketing, visibility is key. If your audience members don’t see themselves in your marketing media, they’re not going to be inclined to buy. Previously excluded groups have great brand loyalty. They appreciate seeing someone they can relate to. Show them you care, and you’ll win their dollar.

But when it comes to *inclusion*, sensitivity is vital. Don’t resort to stereotypes in your media. Your audience will consider it offensive.

Tone-deaf missteps can be fatal. Remember [Pepsi’s ill-fated 2017 attempt](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2017/apr/04/kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad-protest-black-lives-matter) to show Kendall Jenner at a protest rally with echoes of Black Lives Matter? (The Kardashians and the oppressed don’t mix.) Or even worse, cringe and recall H&M’s insensitive [January 2018 ad](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/01/09/hm-apologises-image-black-child-wearing-coolest-monkey-jungle/) featuring a black kid wearing a green hoodie reading "COOLEST MONKEY IN THE JUNGLE." Or the infamous October 2017 [Dove Facebook ad](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/08/dove-apologises-for-ad-showing-black-woman-turning-into-white-one) where a black woman morphed into a white woman? (What were these people *thinking*?)

There’s another important way you can promote your brand’s D&I efforts: hire more diverse people for your creative and marketing teams. A greater variety of voices will give your marketing efforts a broader scope—rather than a narrow white, male perspective. They can also help you keep from stumbling into a booby trap of Kardashian proportions.

Respect your audience, and they’ll come to you.