

MARKETING

Racial representation in ads can only benefit brands: Kantar

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Luxury brands need to diversify their marketing efforts. Image credit: Burberry

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Marketers should not hesitate to diversify advertising, as multiracial campaigns can resonate with all demographics if the messaging is authentic.

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During Kantar's "I&D in Advertising: Diverse Reactions to Inclusive Advertising" webinar, a market research executive discussed how racial representation in advertising is changing. Racial representation peaked following the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 but has generally remained stable for several years.

"It's how people are portrayed, rather than just their presence that makes the difference on how effective the creative is," said Deepark Varma, head of neuroscience for the insights division at Kantar, San Francisco.

Community connections

According to U.S. Census data, the country has grown more diverse in the last decade and this trend is expected to accelerate. By 2060, it is forecast that more than 56 percent of the U.S. population will be people of color while white people will be the minority.

This shift underscores the importance for marketers to embrace diversity in advertising.

People of color have an affinity towards diverse communities, both consciously and subconsciously according to Kantar's neuroscience research. Rates are the highest among Black Americans, who outscored Asians and Hispanics for both explicit and implicit affinity for diverse communities.

These feelings can translate to consumer reactions about advertising as well.

Sixty-eight percent of all consumers agree that ads with diverse characters are an authentic representation of society.

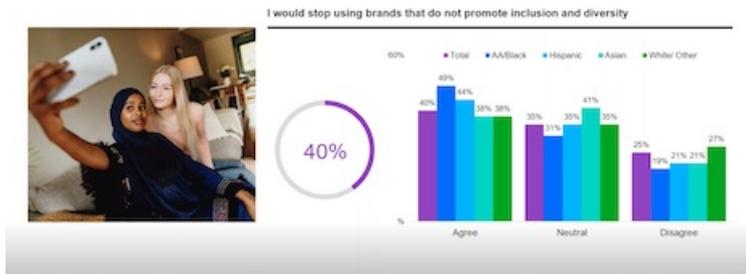
Again, this feeling is strong among communities of color, with 79 percent of Black consumers agreeing with this sentiment, followed by Hispanic and Asian consumers at 72 and 71 percent, respectively. White consumers trailed at 64 percent, below the general population.

More than half of consumers, 52 percent, will trust a brand more if its ads reflect their culture, including more than

six in 10 Black or Asian consumers.

For those brands that do not feature diverse and inclusive advertising, 40 percent of all consumers will stop using those brands. About a third of consumers are neutral.

Not promoting diversity could hurt brands but promoting it will not alienate other consumers given that a third are neutral to the idea.



Not promoting diversity can be more harmful to brands than inclusive advertising. Image credit: Kantar

"Not promoting diversity will lead to erosion of trust," Mr. Varma said. "And neuroscience studies have shown that lack of trust leads to lack of loyalty.

"The interesting part is that promoting inclusion and diversity will not hurt your brand," he said. "It gives you a very good reason to promote diversity and inclusion, since it can affect the ROI for brand."

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