

Background to The Brief

Introduction

Back in 2019 the Diversity in Advertising Award challenged the advertising community to better represent the LGBT community.

That year the £1m prize was won by Starbucks/Iris Worldwide. The winning Ad 'What's Your Name' was a sensitive portrayal of Transgender teenager coming to terms with his/her identity. It was a beautiful piece of storytelling that reflected the Lived Experiences of that community.

It went on to win a Cannes Lion and was held up by many as a brave & ground-breaking piece of work.

We hoped many other brands would take inspiration from its success and would follow suit with their own campaigns, but sadly we haven't seen an increase in representation. Instead, through 2023 we've seen **some evidence** of brands pulling back from LGBTQIA+ campaigns out of concern of getting things wrong.

"Research continues to demonstrate that an inclusive future is the only viable future for successful enterprises. Concern is understandable – and in all of this no one understands that concern more immediately than LGBTQIA+ people – but some situations call for allies to be brave, and this is one of them"

Cassius Naylor
Co-director of advocacy at Outvertising



LGBTQIA+ Community Size

New industry-leading insight from Channel 4 has shown **zero growth in representation since 2019, with LGBTQIA+ communities** appearing in just 3% of UK adverts.

Whilst the **England and Wales latest census** states that a similar percentage - 3.2% - of the population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or 'other sexual orientation' (c. 1.5 million), it is widely believed that the census vastly underestimates the size of this population.

We know that 7.5% of the total population did not answer the sexual orientation question in the census at all, rising to 10% amongst those who were from non-white ethnic backgrounds – and we know some of this is down to a deep **mistrust & fear of disclosing sexuality** in this way.

We believe the LGBTQIA+ audience is much larger than the reported 3.2% of the population, and as such, we believe that this remains an under represented group within UK advertising.

Stereotypical representation

Our own insight also found that brands too often resorted to **stereotypical representations** of the LGBTQIA+ community, defaulting to characters that skew young, white and male, with ethnicity, age and disability considerations rarely covered within ad creatives - meaning the vast number of lived experiences and identities within the LGBTQIA+ community are not adequately portrayed and therefore the community is often **misrepresented**.





Time to be *bold*

Channel 4's 2023 Diversity in Advertising Award brief challenges advertisers to Be Bold and 'Proud all Over'. We want brands to create a powerful advertising creative which accurately and sensitively portrays an under-represented group within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Campaigns should aim to authentically portray LGBTQIA+ communities' stories, lived experiences and diversity.

Time to '*Represent the Under-Represented*'

The fact the UK census figure of 3% of the UK population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual and pansexual is widely believed to be inaccurate, due to fear of disclosure is itself proof some of this community still do not feel accepted in society.

Maybe this should come as no surprise, since hostility, discrimination and hate crimes against marginalised groups has been on the rise in the recent years. This increase in intolerance and the toxic online debate around LGBTQIA+ rights (by a small minority) mean that brands appear to be more reticent to take a stand in this space in comparison to recent years. However, never in modern times has strong allyship been more needed.

Time to *Diversify The Diversity*

Whilst there is an expansive list of identities that make up the LGBTQIA+ community, the stories being told are very limited. In fact, LGBTQIA+ characters are 2.4x more likely to be male than female, 3x more likely to be from a White ethnic background than Black, and 12x more likely to be White than Mixed Ethnicity. There were no Asian or disabled LGBTQIA+ characters in any of the ads audited.

Channel 4 recognises the important role advertising has to play in telling untold stories, creating authentic portrayal of communities, and reflecting the diversity within modern Britain.

Just as they called for allies to stand together with them to deliver the ground-breaking Black To Front project in 2021, which sought to increase representation of Black talent both on & off screen, they call once again for allyship from advertisers to stand in support of the LGBTQIA+ community, at a time when both hate crimes & social-media backlash against supportive brands is on the increase.





Who can enter?

Entries are welcomed from any part of the advertising industry and for ideas covering all brands that are suitable and legal to advertise across Channel 4 platforms. Entries can be submitted by creative agencies, media agencies or by brands direct - but all entries must come with direct endorsement of the concept from a senior figure at the brand featured.

Remember the Brand Objective

The Diversity in Advertising Award exists to encourage better representation of diverse communities within mainstream advertising. However, for this to become long-lasting change, we want to see this inclusion in the context of a successful marketing campaign – and as such, your campaign idea must set out to achieve your specific brand marketing objectives, just like any other marketing campaign you run would. Please also detail how you think the concept will deliver successful results for your brand.

Be Sustainable

The winning Diversity in Advertising Award ad and accompanying 4Studio campaign must follow AdGreen guidelines provided by the Advertising Association which helps eliminate the negative environmental impacts of production.

Check the Entry Criteria

The judges will be making their decisions against published criteria. You can find the detail on our website: [Diversity in Advertising Award](#).

Key Dates

Your 2-page PDF summary must be entered by:

 **4pm**
7th September 2023



Full details of the entry dates and requirements can be found at our website: [Diversity in Advertising Award](#).