

Diversity & Representation:

Guide to potential areas for
bias in the creative process



On a Journey Towards More Diverse Creative

“Diversity is a priority which impacts not only internal inclusion, but also external representation. Inclusive workplaces inspire diversity of thinking, which drives creativity & innovation. This allows us to better understand & reflect consumers, and in turn helps brands differentiate. Inclusive marketing and communications not only make a positive impact on society but also have been shown to outperform from an effectiveness perspective.

At all stages of the marketing process, including but not limited to the communications we create, there is an opportunity to better represent. We can all go on a journey from not considering diverse audiences to fairly representing them, or even purposefully driving action for change – wherever you are in that process we hope to help you take the next step.

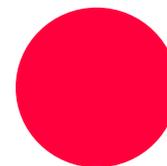
Often the barriers to representative creative come in the form of unconscious bias. This guide to the creative process aims to highlight some of the simple nudges and critical questions marketers can use to steer themselves throughout. We’ve also included a small sample of some of the resources & partners available to support on this journey, though many others exist and we will continue to build this list out on the WFA Diversity Hub.”

Jerry Daykin,
WFA Diversity Ambassador &
GSK Consumer Healthcare



Purposeful Inclusion

Truly connecting brand purpose to meaningful action, often with partners and deliberate storytelling



Positive Representation

Starting to fairly address different viewpoints, reflect different consumers and respond to different needs



Basic Stereotyping

Featuring diverse groups but working with pre-existing biases and stereotypes



Exclusion

No consideration of diversity within marketing

Created by the WFA Diversity Task Force:



Jerry Daykin,
WFA Diversity
Ambassador & GSK
Senior Media Director

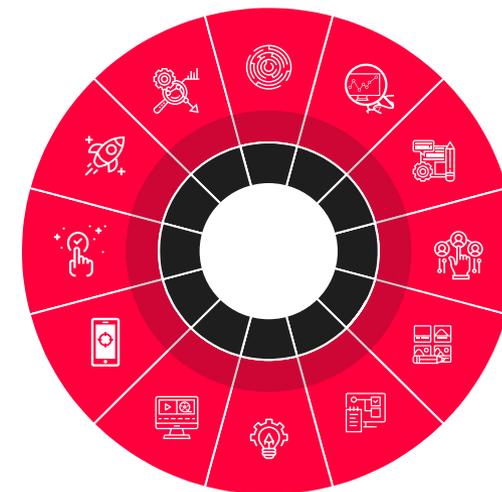
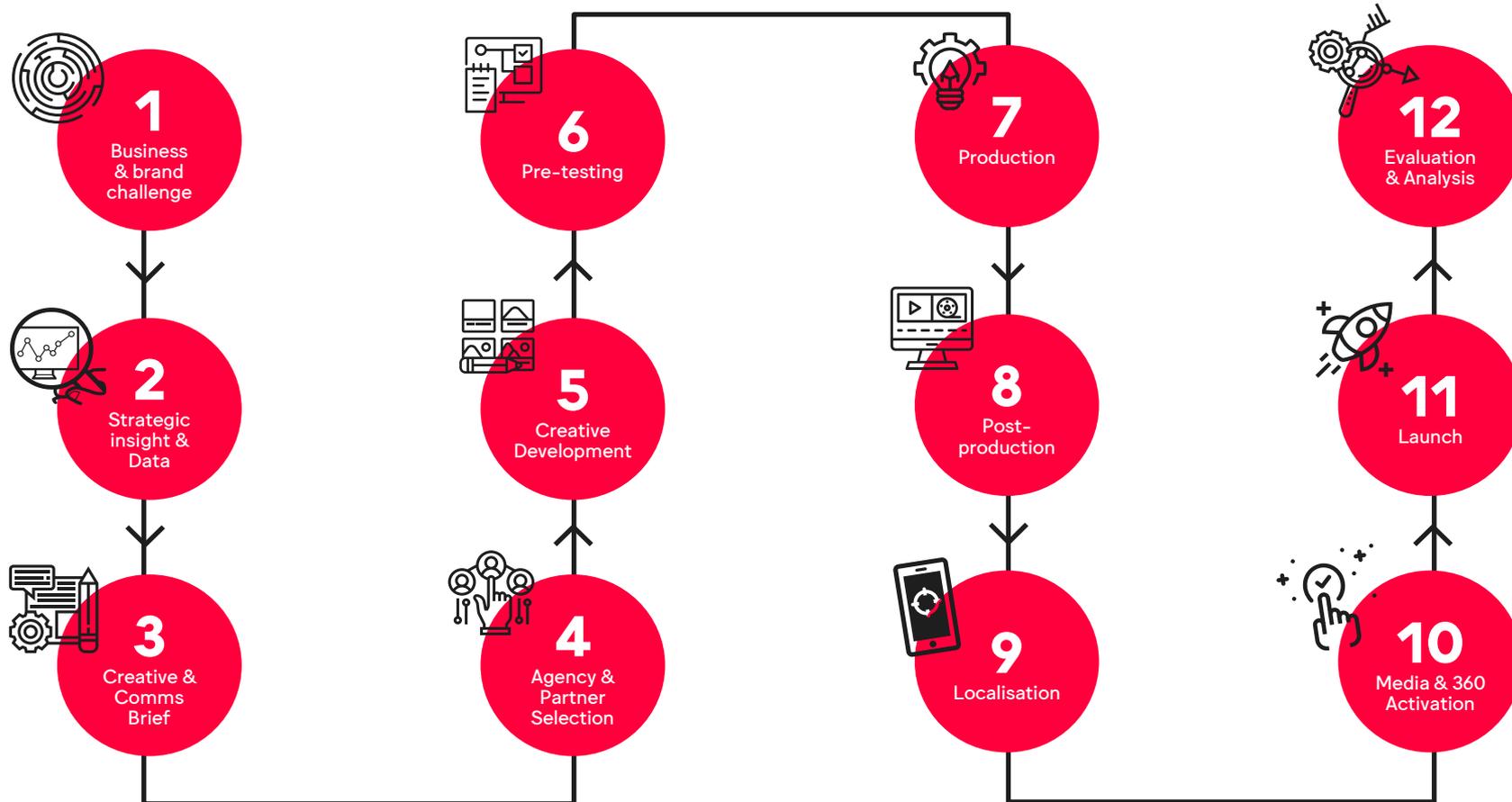


Belinda Smith,
WFA Diversity
Ambassador & CEO
Americas, m/SIX



WFA Task Force
A coalition from across
WFA members and
agency partners

Key Stages Across the Creative Process





1

Business & brand challenge

What steps are you taking to make sure your brand is accessing all the diverse opportunities for growth?

More progressive and inclusive brands perform better, and all brands can positively reflect and engage consumers.



In 'Liberty Fields', Diageo's Guinness brand told the inspirational story of a Japanese women's rugby team who stood together, in the face of societal pressure, to pursue their passion for the game.

Some questions to ask yourself

Who is your audience? Who is excluded? Are they a potential business opportunity?

Does your audience reflect the emerging consumer base for the category?

Is there a deliberate diversity & sustainability opportunity for your brand?

What's the next credible but authentic step forward your brand can take?

Is your business willing stand up for what's right and truly reflect your consumers? Are senior stakeholders bought in?

Some available resources

[WFA Diversity & Inclusion Hub:](#)

Diversity resources including business case statistics

[ANA's Alliance for Inclusive and Multi-Cultural Marketing:](#)

Home to #SeeHer and #SeeAll initiatives

[UK Advertising Needs You:](#)

Curated diversity resources for brands and agencies



2

Strategic
insight & Data

How are you ensuring your strategy is grounded in diverse consumer insight?

Our bias can get in the way and sometimes we don't understand the nuances of diverse audiences.



Ikea's "ThisAbles," a suite of product adaptors that make the company's furniture accessible to those with disabilities, took home the Grand Prix for Health and Wellness at Cannes Lions 2019. The campaign also features a film starring Eldar Yusupov, a man with cerebral palsy – and who is also a copywriter and helped conceive the line.

Some questions to ask yourself

Is there any bias in research used to gather insight? Does it capture representative perspectives or just broad generalisations?

How are consumer 'pen portraits' or mood boards depicted/visualized?

Have you managed to capture nuance & avoid generalization?

What are the perceptions of your brand within representative targets?

What do you know about the cultural tensions and audience in each active market?

Are stereotyping concerns tested with the affected group?

Have you engaged experts who can help advise on how specific audiences might positively or negatively interpret your intentions?

Some available resources

Demographic data:

Media planning agency | Population census data | [UN Stats](#) | [UN Data](#)

Unstereotype Alliance [Gender Equality Attitude Study](#)

[The Valuable 500 for Disability Leadership](#)

Diversity-focused insights e.g. [Sentiment Live](#) (part of DECA), [Audience Opportunity Analysis](#) (Creative Equals)



3

Creative & Comms Brief

Are you bringing representative inspiration and deep insight to the brief?

Sometimes we bring our own stereotypes to the brief, or fail to inspire with our intent or our insight.



In 'All Love is Love', Budweiser (AB InBev) redesigns its bottles to empower Chinese customers to celebrate all forms of love for China's 2019 Qixi festival (Chinese Valentine's Day) on August 25th

Some questions to ask yourself

Does your brief make it clear that representation is key? Does it bring clear stimulus/inspiration?

Is the target/audience definition a stereotype? Could it be more progressive?

Who is excluded? Are they a potential business opportunity?

Have you considered different perspectives to help you with the direction of the brief?

What are the inclusive expressions of your brand's emotional benefit?

Some available resources

[The Outvertising Guide for Specific LGBTQ+ audience considerations](#)

[The Conscious Advertising Network manifesto for wider brief considerations](#)

[Creative Equals](#) – consultancy across the creative process

[Wunderman Thompson's 'Designing for Everyone' report](#)



4

Agency &
Partner
Selection

What steps are you taking with your suppliers to bring in more diverse talent?

Diverse teams bring new perspectives and make better work, but our industry is simply not diverse enough.



Dove partnered with Getty Images and women and non-binary individuals everywhere to create Project #ShowUs, a collection of 10,000+ images that offer a more inclusive vision of beauty and are available for all media and advertisers to use.

Some questions to ask yourself

Do you have a procurement diversity approach and a supply chain of diverse partners?

Have you asked partners for evidence of representation across their overall output?

Could a minority owned, or focused, partner augment the work of your AOR?

Are you working together with your agency on this journey? Is there more you could be doing to support them to become more representative and diverse?

Some available resources

[HBR – Why You Need a Supplier Diversity Program](#)

[ANA – The Power of Supplier Diversity](#)

[Free The Work](#) – talent platform for creatives

[People Of Colour Collective](#) – diverse creative network

[Bid Black](#) – showcasing black creativity

[Creative Equals](#) – agency diversity audits



5

Creative
Development

Are you keeping diversity top of mind at all stages of the creative process?

Stereotypes are too often used in our work, and even with good intent we still sometimes don't get it right.



GSK's Theraflu brand ran the campaign "We can't fight flu without you" which positively encouraged black & Latin American audiences to get the flu jab, whilst avoiding stereotyping.

Some questions to ask yourself

How are you applying the Unstereotype Alliance's 3Ps?

- **Presence** is all about who is featured in the communication;
- **Perspective** is about who is framing the story;
- **Personality** is all about the depth of the character.

Where could diversity help originate powerful storytelling?

How diverse is the creative team and their inputs? Do they understand how different communities like to be represented?

How will diversity be reflected in different ad formats/lengths?

Some available resources

[Unstereotype Alliance membership includes detailed 3Ps toolkit & resources](#)

[The Outvertising Guide offers specific LGBTQ+ audience considerations](#)

[Ad Color](#) – a community of diverse professionals

[Creative Equals](#) – applied unconscious bias training



6

Pre-testing

Does your testing and learning plan incorporate representative audiences?

Broad testing on universal demographics can miss an opportunity to understand diverse perspectives on the work.



WHAT IF THIS VALENTINE'S WE CHALLENGE SEXUAL NORMS. 'CAUSE LET'S BE HONEST. WHY DO WE CONFORM? BEHIND THE MESSAGES OF LOVE AND SEX, SOMETIMES IT'S NOT AS GOOD AS WE EXPECT. TOLD I NEED TO MOAN LIKE THAT. I SHOULD LOOK LIKE THIS. SWIPE LEFT. DOUBLE TAP. THE PERFECT PROFILE PIC. WE'RE ALL UNDER PRESSURE AND ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. SO WHAT IF WE TAKE A STAND FOR SEX? WORRY LESS ABOUT HOW IT 'SHOULD' LOOK. CELEBRATE HOW IT CAN FEEL. WHERE PORN'S NOT THE NORM. AND STD'S ARE KINDA REAL. WOMEN AREN'T JUDGED TOO QUICK. GUYS AREN'T TOLD THEY NEED A BIG **** FROM THE FIRST TIME. TO "NO NOT THIS TIME". THROW OUT DEFINITIONS & LET GO OF TRADITIONS. YOU DO YOU. OR HE. SHE. THEM. THEY. US & WE. LOVE IS LOVE NO MATTER ORIENTATION. ISN'T IT TIME WE CHALLENGE SEX EXPECTATIONS?



Some questions to ask yourself

Does pre-testing include a check of bias or stereotyping?

Are stereotyping issues researched amongst the affected group? As well as with experts who understand how those groups are likely to react?

What influence could the storyboard have, does this prompt any areas of concern or opportunity?

Have you leveraged input from your own businesses' ERG groups or diversity council?

Have you created a safe space for frank and honest critique of the creative and interpretations?

Some available resources

[Unstereotype Metric](#) – consider including the UM in pre-testing

[The Diversity Standards Collective](#) – for pre-testing and consultancy with diverse groups

On Valentine's Day last year, Durex unveiled a new branding and positioning centred on challenging sexual taboos, stigmas and outdated attitudes in favour of more positive and inclusive ones about sex.



7

Production

Are you keeping diversity top of mind at all stages of the production process?

We all sometimes fail to deliver on our intent and the teams making the work often lack diversity.



For the “Put Pleasure First” campaign on Mars Wrigley’s DOVE® Chocolate brand in China, Mars crowdsourced via open challenge from talented women in China’s Film Industry for all the key creative roles in its short film production, from director to camera to sound and lighting and more.

Some questions to ask yourself

What is the casting brief? Have you allowed enough time for an inclusive casting process? Could an under-represented group play a greater role?

Have you considered whether props or wardrobe choices reinforce stereotypes?

What is the diversity of the full production crew?

Is the shoot an open, inclusive & unbiased environment, with safe spaces and accessible facilities (e.g. wheelchair access or gender-neutral bathrooms)?

Will there be a triple bid tender including female/other under-represented directors?

Some available resources

[Unstereotype Alliance 3Ps Toolkit](#)

[Specialist casting agencies, e.g. Looks Like Me](#)

[Free The Work](#) – talent platform for creatives

Demographic data:

[Media planning agency](#) | [Population census data](#) | [UN Stats](#) | [UN Data](#)

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8

Post -
production

Are you checking back to ensure the edit delivers on our vision?

Post-production can change the final impression of the work positively and negatively.



Some questions to ask yourself

Is there diversity in the post-production team?

What is the casting for any voice-overs, are you avoiding stereotypes there?

Have you considered colloquial nuances of accents?

Are there opportunities to make assets more accessible? (e.g. CCs, audio descriptions)

Have you ensured the approval processes account for bias?

Have you double checked that the final edit delivers on your diversity ambition (in all cut-downs)?

Some available resources

Purple Tuesday, www.purpletuesday.org.uk

[W3C Web Accessibility Initiative](#)

Amazon partnered with Brand Advance on their 'Voice of Trans' activation which used multiple channels, including Alexa itself, and ended up leading to a UN resolution around trans rights.



9

Localisation

Are you considering local nuances and ensuring that both global and local impacts of decisions are considered?

Sometimes when copy is localized it can either be inappropriate for that market or adapted to be less progressive.



Some questions to ask yourself

Are there any local cultural nuances which could make your content inappropriate?

For the adaptation of existing asset does the casting truly reflect local diversity?

If replacing diverse casting are you changing it to be more representative, or the opposite?

What data can you access to support a more progressive agenda?

If you are using an older copy, is the content still appropriate? Has the global or local context changed?

Some available resources

[WFA Diversity & Inclusion Hub:](#)
Continually updated diversity resources

[Creative Equals](#) – training & consultancy right through the process

GSK's Sensodyne brand partnered with Gay Times in the UK to create localised LGBT+ representative content from a global campaign, but also to positively amplify it within that community.



Have you reviewed your media plans to ensure they are progressive and appropriate?

Where you place your content, and what it funds, is as important as the content itself.



The Philips #YouAreYou campaign came to life on the canals of Amsterdam Pride, but the team also celebrated the moment through their communications in mainstream & LGBT media titles.

Some questions to ask yourself

Are your media plans safe from funding inflammatory content, hate speech or disinformation?

Are there any channels that would be inappropriate to be present on?

Could your marketing mix, data usage or brand safety settings exclude certain groups?

Have you considered actively including or partnering with diversity-focused media partners? Could you even create new content together?

Are there unexpected touchpoints relevant to new groups?

Some available resources

[WFA's Global Alliance for Responsible Media \(GARM\)](#)

[Conscious Advertising Network](#) – for best practice on media hate speech & disinformation

[Brand Advance](#) - Example of a diversity-focused media network



11

Launch

Have you considered, as part of your launch plans, the impact amongst different diverse groups?

We need to prepare for positive and negative responses from consumers and colleagues.



Some questions to ask yourself

What is the monitoring / response plan for any feedback on representation? Are your social media teams briefed?

Are you prepared on how to respond to any hateful comments you receive?

Are you ready to respond if the communities you are trying to positively represent raise questions?

Have you prepared responses to best/worst possible outcomes?

What are your internal launch plans, have you engaged your ERGs?

Some available resources

[WFA Diversity & Inclusion Hub:](#)
Continually updated diversity resources

[Outvertising](#) – provide specific support & advice for LGBT+ considerations

[Monitor feedback to care lines and in media](#)

Despite some conservative boycotts of its products following the earlier 'The Best Men Can Be' campaign, in 'First Shave' Gillette (P&G) persisted and leaned even harder into reconsidering socially constructed ideas of gender and the pressures they impose on people.



How are you building your body of knowledge, effectiveness and insight?

We are all just starting this journey and need to create a learning culture.



Some questions to ask yourself

What was the commercial upside? How are you tracking the impact on your brand?

Does your measurement approach represent diversity?

What is the diversity across the portfolio & creative output?

Are you making progress in positive representation? What capability gaps still exist?

Can you make a positive case study to inspire & engage internally or externally?

Have you truly understood and learnt from the actual response to your work, whether positive or negative?

Some available resources

[ANA Gender Equality Metric \(GEM\)](#)

[Geena Davis Institute for Gender in Media](#)

[Unstereotype Alliance's UM Metric \(see 3Ps Toolkit\)](#)

[Internal or external audits of your overall work \(e.g. Creative Equals\)](#)



The combination of empowering marketing messages, backed by a diverse product range bringing this message to life, has helped Barbie have much more resonance as a brand in recent years.



The Diverse Creative Process on a Page

This guide has tried to offer many questions and solutions right across the creative process, and whilst we think that depth is important, we know it can be overwhelming. Here on one page are the key topics and questions to be asking. Pick a couple to start focussing on today and take it from there.



The WFA Diversity Task Force

The task force aims to become the:

1

CONVENER of the right individuals across the global marketing industry in order to ensure the world's top marketers speak with coherent and compelling messaging on the subject;

2

CURATOR of best in class examples and research supporting the case for why diversity and inclusion matter (WFA will build online repository);

3

CATALYST for local coalitions to help drive change at a national level which really makes a difference;

4

CHALLENGER to keep pushing the industry (and the WFA) to do more by looking for new opportunities, and having tough conversations when needed.

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Special thanks to these partners for their input:

WFA Diversity Hub & Task Force

Curating industry-wide best practice, resources and news in a single global destination.

Download the [‘Marketer’s Approach to Diversity and Inclusion’](#) guide. Listen & subscribe to the WFA’s [Better Marketing Podcast](#).

Discover [GARM](#) (Global Alliance for Responsible Media).



Outvertising

A not-for-profit LGBTQ+ advertising & marketing group.

Provide resources to support LGBTQ+ people working in the industry as well as to support the creation of inclusive creative approaches.

Download the Outvertising Guide to Inclusive Advertising, or their Media Guide.

Unstereotype Alliance

Industry-wide alliance convened by UN Women and global players from across the marketing industry.

Home to key news, research and resources, including the 3Ps framework & Unstereotype Metric we encourage you to consider.

Full access to deep dive trainings and resources may require a membership.



Brand Advance

Example of a Diversity-Focused media network with connections to diverse media titles globally.

Wider DECA & Sentiment services can help brands with overall transformation & insight.

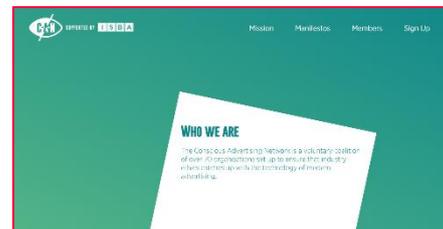
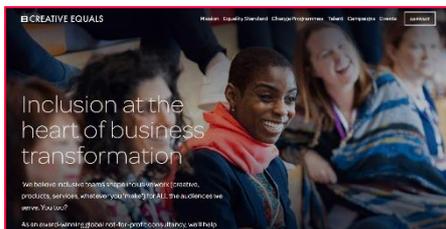
Brand Advance are a commercial organisation and charge for most of their services.

Creative Equals

An award-winning global consultancy who put inclusion at the heart of business transformation to unlock purpose, innovation, growth opportunities and profitability.

Partner with progressive organisations providing bespoke strategic services, business intelligence and workshops delivering inclusive leadership, marketing and cultures.

Provide applied bias sessions across the creative process – one of their “rewire” workshops ignited this piece of work.



Conscious Advertising Network

A voluntary coalition of over 70 organisations set up to ensure that industry ethics catches up with the technology of modern advertising.

Provide resources & trainings across their key manifestos of Ad Fraud, Diversity, Informed Consent, Hate Speech, Children’s Wellbeing & Fake News.

Special thanks to Dale Green from Mars, and Grainne Wafer from Diageo, for their special contributions to this guide.





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