

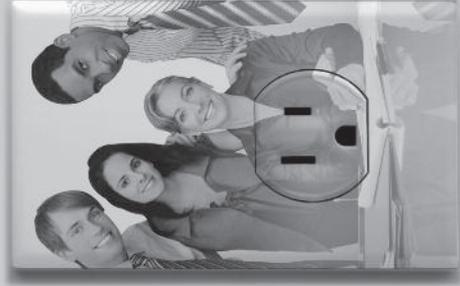
The Gay and Lesbian Consumer Market

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Is Gay a Culture?

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As multicultural beings, we understand that culture defines who we are and provides us with a unique lens to view the world, including brands. As multicultural marketers, the core of what we do is to connect brands to consumers through this unique lens of culture. No one would deny that there is an African American culture or a Latino culture or an Asian American culture. Those more enlightened would say that there are actually multiple cultures within each of those broad ethnic categories.

Gay culture must be considered when developing marketing communications to motivate these desirable consumers.

What about the lucrative Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered market (LGBT or gay market, for short)? Do these consumers have a unique cultural lens through which they view brands and the advertising messages meant to capture their interest and engage them to the point of purchase? The short answer is yes. There is a gay culture that needs to be considered when developing marketing communications intended to motivate this desirable, relatively “untapped” consumer segment. Of

course, LGBT Americans are not a monolithic group with a singular experience. But as marketers, there is significant reward in identifying and tapping into gay consumers’ shared experiences and values. Reward in the form of increased sales and substantial marketing R.O.I.

Wikipedia defines culture as “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group.” Let’s break this definition into its individual parts and review some of the cultural insights uncovered by years of Prime Access proprietary research. Insights that lead to measurable results in the marketplace.

Shared “Attitudes” – A shared “outsider” status and feeling of not being part of the mainstream leads many LGBTs to forge their own way in life. Tapping into this independent spirit can be a successful way into this market. Gay culture also recognizes the fluidity of gender roles and, therefore, LGBTs are less likely to respond to stereotypically “masculine” or “feminine” portrayals.

Shared “Values” – Diversity and inclusion are highly valued by this segment. Using the tools of marketing to communicate that your brand treats all customers as equals, gay or straight, can be a compelling message when conveyed artfully and can

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lead to LGBT brand loyalty. And communicating to LGBTs is extremely efficient, given the availability of highly targeted media channels that exclusively reach this audience.

Shared “Goals” – LGBTs share common goals with all Americans: love, health, prosperity, and, happiness. But these goals take on unique meaning due to sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, finding true love and publicly recognizing that commitment in the face of negative societal attitudes makes celebrating that relationship even more special. How can your brand help LGBTs achieve their goals? Celebrate their lives?

Shared “Practices” – Coming out or revealing one’s sexual orientation

or gender identity to loved ones is a significant milestone in a gay person’s life and a shared “practice” or experience among LGBTs. So is the concept of creating a “chosen family,” a tight-knit group of friends who provide support and love as does a family in the traditional sense. Find a place for your brand within these practices, but do so in a new or unexpected way.

All of these insights can be called upon when creating compelling marketing strategies and developing programs to deliver this audience. By understanding gay culture and then developing marketing communications derived from unique insights, marketers can find sales success in the gay market. That’s our proven approach. We’d be happy to prove it for your brand, too. Prime Access. The Way In®.

- **\$712 billion: Estimated LGBT Buying Power for 2009 (Source: Witeck-Combs Communications)**
- **Gay men and Lesbians are early adopters**
 - **26% of gay men and lesbians vs. 18% of the general population say they are the first to know about new products or services (Source: Prime Access, 2008)**
- **Gay men and Lesbians are influencers**
 - **60% of gay men and lesbians vs. 34% of the general population say people are often asking for their advice (Source: Prime Access, 2008)**

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