



Module 5 (Part 2)

Inclusive Marketing For SMEs

Understand Your Customers and
Inclusive Marketing Barriers

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Discover the DARE Modules Learning Pathway:

Enjoy our learning blocks designed to help SMEs build diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces. Unlock the power of how DEI to drive the sustainable success of your company. Our practical and interactive Modules deliver real life insights and case studies from a European perspective – Join us in creating workplaces and communities where everyone can thrive!

MODULE 1

Introduction: Diversities Reviving European Enterprises

Key Features: Overview and definitions of D&I in SMEs. 12 Dimensions of Diversity. Learning key competencies for business case delivery.

Part 1: Why D&I Matters for SMEs.
Part 2: Building D&I Competencies for SMEs.

MODULE 2

Inclusive Leadership Skills

Key Features: Develop inclusive leadership skills (e.g., Bias awareness and mitigation). Tap into the power of neurodiversity. Measure impact and build resilience.

Part 1: Prepare for Inclusive Change Through Leadership.
Part 2: Unlock Inclusive Leadership & Neurodiversity.
Part 3: Measure Leadership Impact & Build Resilience.

MODULE 3

Inclusive Talent Management for SMEs

Key Features: Inclusive advertising, recruitment and retention. Performance management and leadership succession planning.

Part 1: Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Diverse Talent.
Part 2: Creating Inclusive Job Descriptions & Adverts.
Part 3: Inclusive Selection, Interviewing, and Offer Strategies.
Part 4: Employee Talent Development and Retention.
Part 5: Performance Management and Feedback.
Part 6: Succession Planning and Leadership Development.

MODULE 6

Inclusive Community Engagement for SMEs

Key Features: Learn the six core principles of inclusive community engagement. Understand the four layers to community context and prepare an effective Engagement Framework and Action Plan.

Part 1: Foundations of Inclusive Community Engagement.
Part 2: Understand & Engage Your Community.
Part 3: Ensuring Inclusive Engagement through Shared Value.
Part 4: Prepare for an Effective Community Engagement Framework.
Part 5: Create a Community Engagement Framework & Action Plan.

MODULE 5

Inclusive Marketing For SMEs

Key Features: Embed inclusivity into branding. Understand the needs of diverse audiences. Craft strategic inclusive marketing campaigns.

Part 1: The Power of Inclusive Marketing for SME Brands.
Part 2: Understand Your Customers and Overcome Marketing Barriers.
Part 3: Crafting Inclusive Marketing Campaigns.

MODULE 4

Building an Inclusive Company Culture in SMEs

Key Features: Build an inclusive company culture. Design and deliver a strategic cultural change audit, review policies and practices and empower teams through reward and recognition.

Part 1: Understand and Build an Inclusive Company Culture.
Part 2: Design and Deliver a Strategic Cultural Change Audit.
Part 3: Support Management in Creating a Workplace of Belonging.
Part 4: From Policies to Practice: Cultivating a Culture of Inclusion.
Part 5: Empower Teams Through DEI Collaboration, ERGs, and Recognition.

YOU ARE HERE

Introduction DARE to Module 5

Module 5 is designed to help SMEs leverage the power of inclusive marketing to grow their business, strengthen customer relationships, and make a meaningful impact to company, customers and society. It emphasises that inclusive marketing should not be viewed as a trend but as an integral part of company and brand values, positioning the business strategically when connecting with diverse audiences by recognizing and celebrating their unique identities, values, and experiences.

Part 1: Learn how inclusive marketing drives business growth, and aligns with brand values to connect with diverse audiences authentically.

Part 2: Identify all customer segments and address common barriers like cultural distance and lack of representation to enhance inclusivity in marketing.

Part 3: Master six key elements for creating diverse, accessible, and impactful marketing campaigns.

Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Inclusive Marketing For SMES

The Power of Inclusive Marketing For SME Brands

Understand All Your Customers and Inclusive Marketing Barriers.

Essential Elements For Crafting Inclusive Marketing Campaigns



Part 1
Part 2
Part 3

M5:Part 2

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), inclusive marketing is not just a social responsibility but a strategic advantage in today's diverse and competitive marketplace. To capitalize on this, companies must focus on understanding their customers and the diverse needs of all customer segments. By building meaningful, authentic connections that align with inclusive marketing strategies, business values, and objectives, businesses can better serve their audiences. A deeper understanding of customers' unique needs, experiences, and perspectives enables companies to address these needs more effectively and integrate inclusivity into their marketing strategies. This module explores common barriers SMEs face in inclusive marketing efforts, such as lack of representation, cultural distance, and the pitfalls of using a one-size-fits-all approach.

Understand All Your Customers and Inclusive Marketing Barriers

- ❖ **Understand All Your Customers and Diverse Market Segments:** Gaining insights into the diverse backgrounds and preferences of your audience.
- ❖ **Understand and Address Inclusive Marketing Barriers:** Example lack of representation, cultural distance, or reliance on a one-size-fits-all

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the diverse needs, preferences, and expectations of all their target audiences.
2. Evaluate and adapt their marketing strategies to ensure long-term relevance and engagement with diverse audiences.
3. Recognize and address common barriers to inclusive marketing, including cultural insensitivity and tokenism.

Inclusive Marketing

Understanding Your Customers

Delve into strategies for researching and understanding the diverse needs, preferences, and challenges of your target audience. This section equips SMEs with tools to understand diverse customer segments.

Recent research by Microsoft 49% said they'd stopped buying from a specific brand that was unrepresentative of their values and beliefs. That's why inclusive marketing has become the foundation of many successful business strategies. It's been adopted and put into practice by multiple brands and particularly for clothing, food, motoring, technology, education, finance, and other widely used services.



Inclusivity is Important to Customers

Inclusivity is important to customers as it enables people to choose brands that align with their core values. It makes customers feel seen, heard and valued. When a customer feels resonance with a brand, they are more likely to share the brand or its products with other people in their community – as shown in inclusive marketing statistics below. This can give consumers a sense of pride and belonging, as well as enable them to experience products/brands that had previously been inaccessible.



Understand and Meet the Needs of Your Target Audience

Before you can implement your inclusive marketing strategy, you'll need to identify your target audience. Being inclusive and understanding your target audience is essential in building meaningful connections, building trust, and creating customer experiences that resonate with diverse groups. Having a defined audience is a really helpful tool to make sure you're reaching the right potential customers. But even if you have a fairly specific audience, it's unlikely that everyone within that group is going to be exactly the same.

Understand Diversity Beyond Surface Level. Your target audience comprises people with varying abilities, backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, and socioeconomic statuses. Recognising and addressing these differences is key.

How to apply? Go beyond demographics to understand behaviors, values, and challenges. Use inclusive language, avoid stereotypes, and be sensitive to cultural nuances.

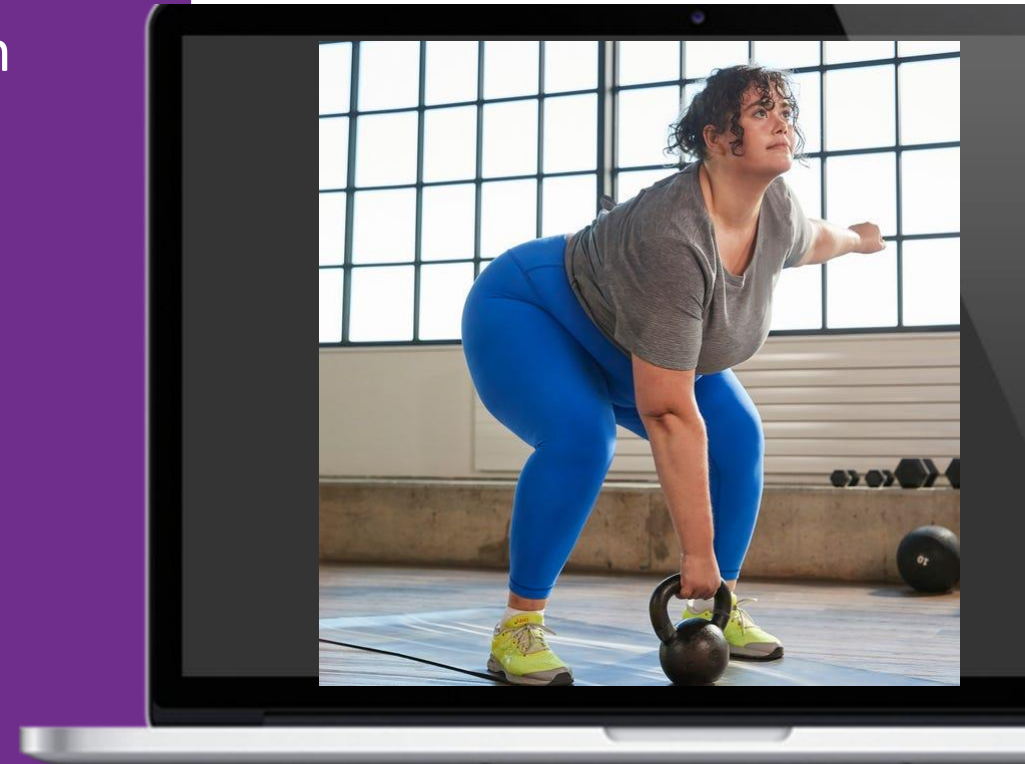
Example: A beauty brand offering a wide range of foundation shades, catering to all skin tones, demonstrates inclusivity by recognizing diversity in skin color.

Lululemon: Getting To Know Your Audience

For the First Time, Six of Lululemon's Top Styles Now Go Up To Size 24. Athleisure brand Lululemon decided to be more inclusive with their sizing. In 2020, they made their apparel available in sizes 0-24. Their revenue grew 43.91% in 2021, 27.5% in 2022, and 23.01% in 2023.

Inclusive marketing is a win-win. More customers get their needs met, and brands earn more revenue. What's not to love about that?

Example Of Meeting Customer Needs & Differences

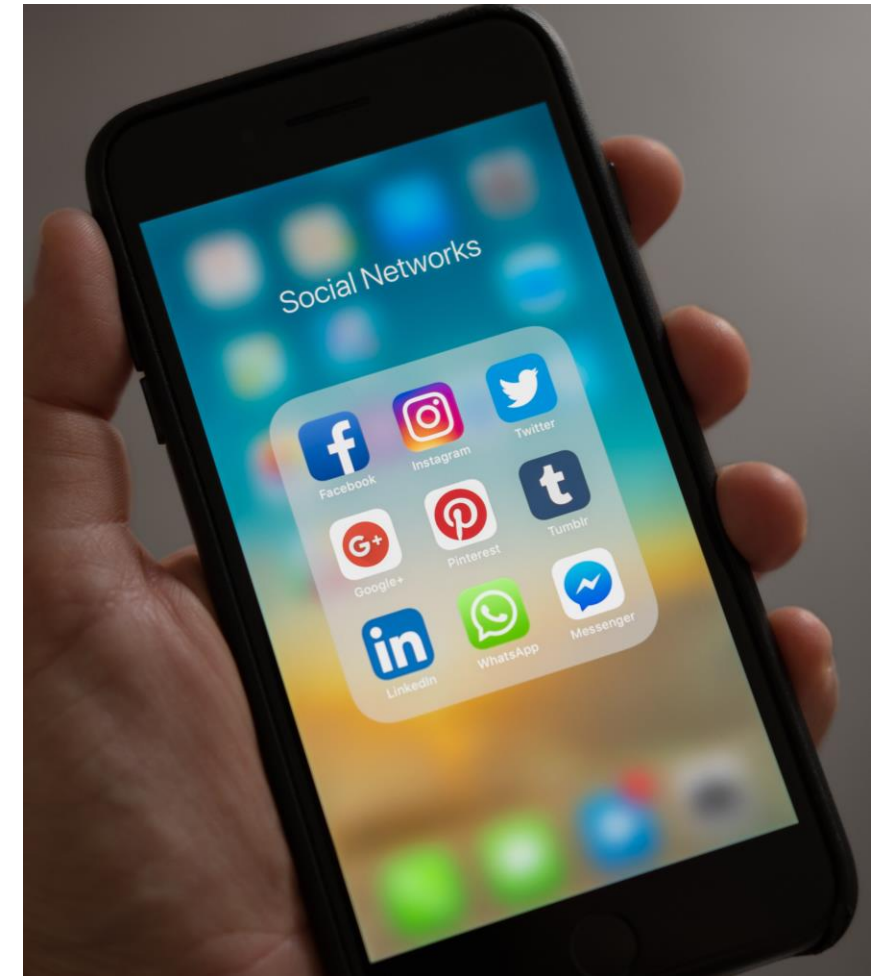


<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/uk/gym-wear/a34075399/lululemon-extended-sizes/>

Research, Seek Feedback and Empathize Understanding the needs of your audience is essential for effective and inclusive marketing, as it ensures your message resonates with diverse groups while building meaningful connections. This means understanding everything you can e.g., your audience's pain points, desires, and motivations ensures your messaging feels personal and relevant.

How to apply? Use surveys, focus groups, and social listening to learn about your customers' lived experiences. Pay attention to how different groups experience your brand or industry. Engage in social listening and other ways to listen to your audience this helps you improve and refine your inclusivity efforts.

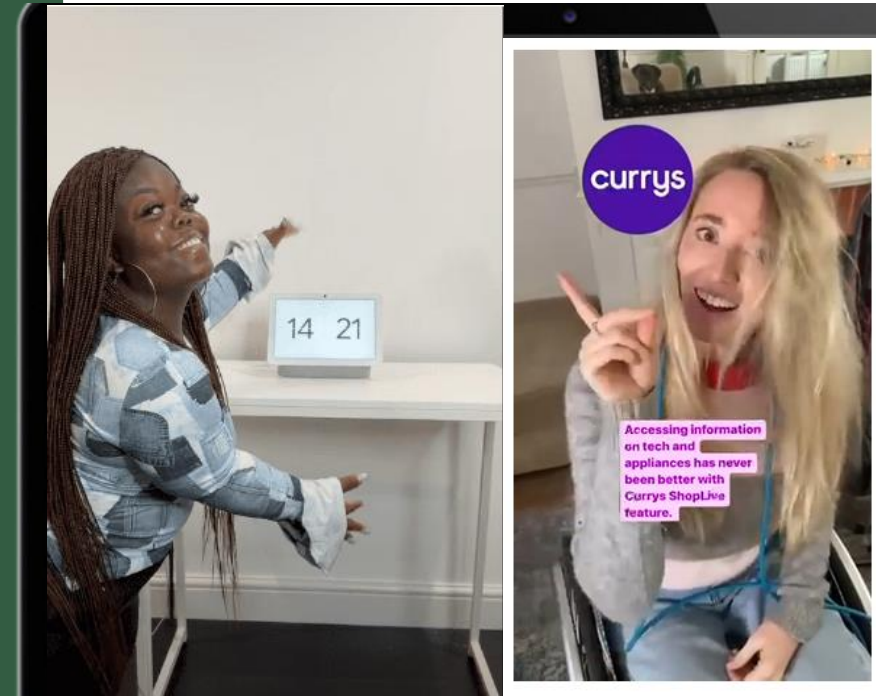
Example: Nike's FlyEase sneakers were created after understanding the struggles faced by individuals with disabilities who find traditional shoes difficult to put on.



Currys Campaign 'Currys Tech Hacks & No Worries' – Theme: Disability

'Currys Tech Hacks & No Worries' campaign was a month-long campaign in which five influencers within the Disability community shared their personal experiences with tech products, sharing their own 'Tech Hacks' as well as their experience with the 'Quiet Hour' and 'Shop Live' services that the brand offers to increase accessibility. This campaign was a huge success and showed that information shared with authenticity and 'real life' examples resonated well within the community as well as outside of it.

Example Of Meeting Customer Pain Points, Needs and Preferences



<https://www.purplegoatagency.com/case-studies/currys-marketing-campaign/>

Understand the Needs of Your Audience Actively engage with your audience and demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity, you build trust and brand loyalty while promoting a more equitable marketplace.

Action: Start by conducting thorough research to identify the demographics, behaviors, values, and preferences of your audience.

Use tools like surveys, social media insights, and focus groups to gather data, paying particular attention to underrepresented or marginalized communities.

Action: Listening to their experiences and incorporating their feedback helps address unique needs and challenges authentically.

Example: Starbucks introduced non-dairy milk options after feedback from vegan and lactose-intolerant customers, aligning its offerings with audience preferences.



Action: Analyze cultural contexts and accessibility requirements to create messaging that is respectful, relevant, and engaging for everyone.

Action: Engage diverse stakeholders in marketing design: Host focus groups with employees, customers, and community representatives from different backgrounds to gather insights.

Action: Localise marketing strategies: Adapt campaigns to resonate with cultural and regional contexts. Partner with local influencers who represent diverse groups and align with your brand values.

Action: Collaborate with other companies that work with your target audiences, e.g., SMEs owned by women and organisations that deal with minorities, and co-create campaigns. Feature their products/services in your promotions.

Example: Starbucks introduced non-dairy milk options after feedback from vegan and lactose-intolerant customers, aligning its offerings with audience preferences.



Next Step is Craft Tailored Marketing Strategies:

Once you understand your audience's needs, the next step is to use this information to craft tailored marketing strategies that genuinely connect with them.

1. **Start by segmenting** your audience based on their preferences, behaviors, and values to ensure personalized messaging.
2. **Design inclusive campaigns** that reflect their cultural context, using inclusive language and visuals that resonate with their experiences.
3. **Incorporate accessibility features** such as captions, alt text, and easy-to-read formats to ensure your content is engaging for people of all abilities.
4. **Use storytelling** to highlight authentic narratives and diverse voices, demonstrating your brand's commitment to unheard voices.
5. **Leverage data** to refine product or service offerings, aligning them with your audience's priorities.
6. **Regularly monitor feedback** and engagement metrics to adapt and improve your strategy, showing that you listen, care, and evolve based on their input. By using audience insights effectively, you create campaigns that are not only inclusive but also impactful and memorable.

Dove Effectively Meeting Customer Needs

Dove is a powerful example of a brand that effectively meets its customers' needs through inclusive marketing, focusing on self-esteem, body positivity, and authenticity.

- ❖ Their "Real Beauty" campaign highlights women of various ages, ethnicities, body types, and abilities, breaking away from traditional beauty stereotypes. This approach works because it aligns with their audience's evolving desire for representation and authenticity, making people feel seen and valued. By using real women instead of models, Dove fosters relatability and trust, positioning the brand as one that genuinely cares about its customers' well-being.
- ❖ Dove's purpose is rooted in empowering individuals to embrace their natural beauty and boosting self-confidence, particularly for women and young girls.
- ❖ A prime example is the Dove Self-Esteem Project, where they partner with organisations like schools, educators, and non-profits to provide resources and workshops aimed at fostering positive body image among young people. By aligning with trusted institutions, Dove enhances its credibility and extends the reach of its message to communities that value empowerment and education.

Dove collaborates with influencers and advocates who authentically represent diverse audiences. These partnerships amplify their campaigns by connecting with influencers' engaged followers, ensuring the message feels personal and relatable.

For instance, using influencers who promote body positivity or mental health awareness helps Dove further its mission while benefiting the influencers by associating them with a globally recognized brand with strong values.

Dove also builds partnerships with media platforms and content creators to craft compelling narratives that align with their brand purpose. By co-creating content, such as documentaries or social media challenges, they engage audiences in conversations about beauty and self-esteem. These initiatives enable a win-win situation: Dove reinforces its commitment to societal change while its partners gain visibility and credibility through association with a trusted brand.

This collaborative approach ensures Dove's campaigns remain authentic, widely accessible, and socially impactful. By building partnerships that align with their purpose and benefit all stakeholders, Dove creates campaigns that drive positive change, strengthen brand loyalty, and maintain relevance in an increasingly values-driven marketplace.



Dove Campaign: The Ad Makeover

Theme: Self Esteem Women and Kids

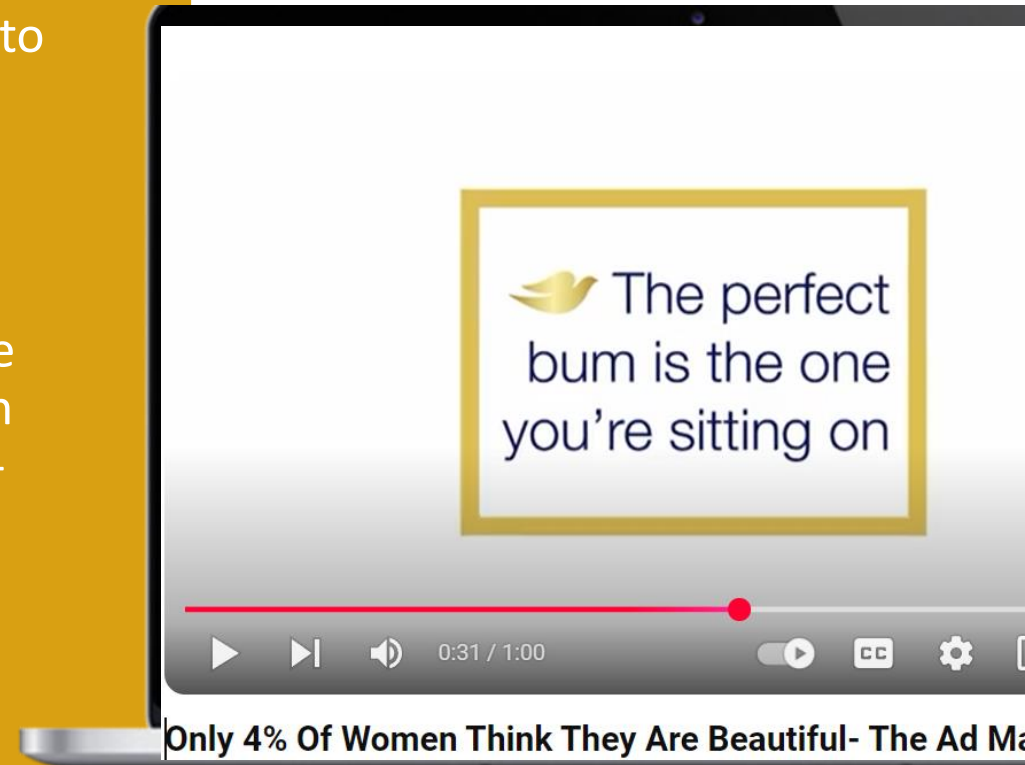
When Dove realized only 4% of women considered themselves beautiful, it created The Ad Makeover, a Facebook app that lets people replace those “feel-bad ads” with messages designed to make women feel good. People can select a positive message and send it to whoever they want. The message they choose would take the place of messages designed to make women feel bad and help them feel beautiful instead.

Women are bombarded daily by ads with messages that make us feel bad about ourselves. It's no wonder only 4% of women believe they are beautiful. Let's replace the bad ads with feel-good messages and change how we feel about our bodies.

Click to create one with the Ad Makeover by Dove.
<http://theadmakeover.dove.com/themake...>

Dove Ad Makeover Campaigns

**Example Of Meeting
Customer Needs and
Preferences Beyond
Surface Level**



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg_jbSP-F2o

Source: <https://www.bazaarvoice.com/blog/9-brand-examples-of-inspiring-inclusive-marketing-campaigns/>

Dove Campaign: Kids Self Esteem

The Dove Self-Esteem Campaign has a mission to build body confidence in young people. Dove corrects traditional beauty standards by promoting inclusion.

Key Features

Workshops and Programs: Dove collaborates with educators, parents and youth organisations to create free educational resources designed to teach young people about body confidence and self-esteem.

Representation: The campaign features individuals of diverse ages, ethnicities, body types, and abilities, moving away from traditional, narrow portrayals of beauty.

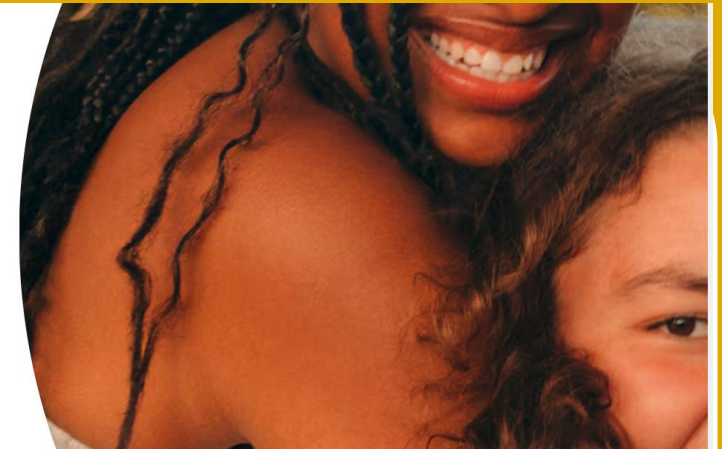
Global Reach: The project has reached over 94 million young people across more than 150 countries, aiming to impact 250 million by 2030.

Research-Based Approach: Dove invests in studies on body image and self-esteem to create data-driven campaigns and resources.



Kids' Self Esteem

We believe no young person should be held back from reaching their full potential.



The Dove Self-Esteem Project has reached over

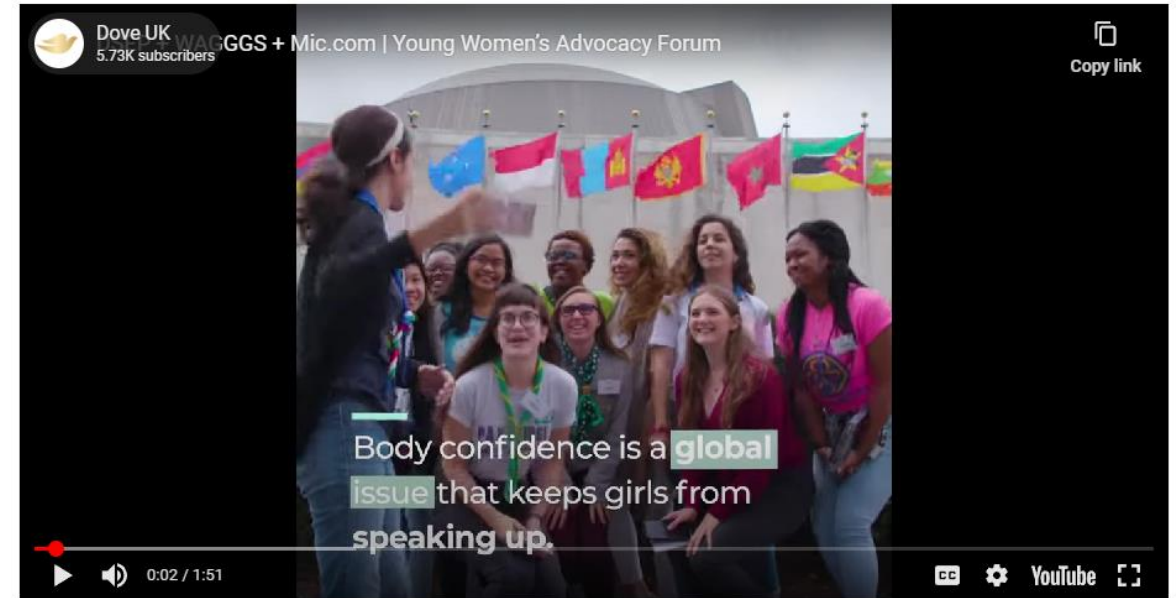
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youths since 2004

Dove Campaign: Kids Self Esteem

All Resources

- ❖ Confidence Kit: A Tool To Support Your Child in Building Self-Esteem
- ❖ Confident Me Workshops on Body Image
- ❖ Confident Me Self Esteem Teaching Resources, Training Videos and More
- ❖ Free Being Me, where Dove works with WAGGGS to reach young girls all around the world and change the way they see themselves. Free Program.
- ❖ True to Me with fun activities so kids can talk about their feelings and body image.
- ❖ Parents Resources, Educator Resources, Youth Leaders Resources



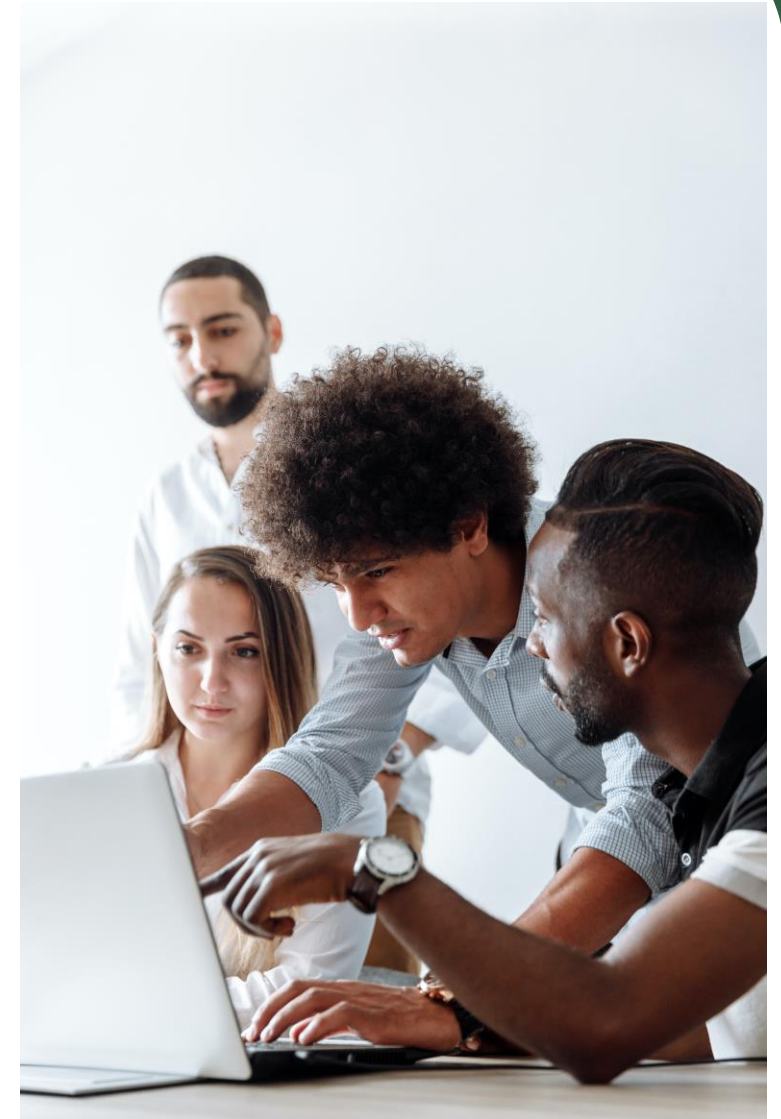
<https://youtu.be/bUIqoN00bk>

'Young girls can really effect change. With Dove's support, they are influencing policymakers to find a way to hear the voices of women...'
Sarah Nancollas, CEO of WAGGGS

Understand Your Target Audience

Test your ideas on other people can determine whether your campaign appears inclusive and ticks the right diversity boxes. Consider focus groups that provide constructive feedback or compare your plans with similar campaigns that have previously been a success. Public opinion is vital when conducting research as the people and groups you're asking are likely to be similar to those you are marketing to. If your plan doesn't work, it's time to go back to the drawing board. [Read all You Need to Know about Market Research](#)

Note: It's impossible to please absolutely everyone, but the very least we can do is try to make sure our inclusive marketing makes our small business as accessible and welcoming to as many people as possible. [Find out more about how to find the right target market for your small business.](#)



Exercise: Understand Your Target Audience

Exercise: Ask yourself: 'Who Am I Hoping to Reach?'

Consider the demographics then decide on the tactics and techniques you'll use to market your products or services to the people or groups you've identified. Not only will this help you create a more efficient and effective inclusive campaign, but it could also improve its chances of success and lead to more sales.

For example, your audience might consist of women aged 25 to 34. Some might identify as LGBTQ+, whereas others will identify as straight. Some might come from working-class backgrounds, whereas others are middle class, some might have a physical disability, or be a woman of colour, or have different religious beliefs. Women of all backgrounds and walks of life are likely to be included in your target audience.



Exercise: Create an Inclusive Audience Persona

This exercise helps small businesses understand their audience in depth and ensures their marketing strategies are inclusive and resonate with diverse customer needs. Use tools to understand the diverse backgrounds, preferences, and needs of your audience.

Action: Use tools like surveys, focus groups, or social media analytics to collect data. Here are some survey questions;

- ☐ Ask customers about challenges, preferences, and barriers (e.g., "What makes it harder to engage with our product/service?").
- ☐ What factors are most important to you when choosing [product/service]?
- ☐ Are there barriers that make it hard for you to engage with businesses like ours?
- ☐ Are your products/services accessible to all personas?
- ☐ Is your messaging neutral, inclusive, and free from bias?
- ☐ Are there gaps in your offerings for any audience segments?



Exercise: Create an Inclusive Audience Persona

Social Listening: Monitor conversations about your industry on social media to spot gaps or areas of improvement. **Example,** a small coffee shop surveys its customers and discovers many prefer plant-based milk options and a quieter workspace.

Build an Inclusive Persona Create detailed audience personas that reflect diversity. Identify at least three personas that represent different segments of your audience. Include:

- ❖ **Demographics:** Age, gender identity, cultural background, ability status, etc.
- ❖ **Psychographics:** Preferences, challenges, values, and goals.
- ❖ **Barriers:** Any difficulties they might face in accessing or using your product/service.
- ❖ **Example Persona:** Name: Alex (They/Them)
- ❖ **Background:** 29 years old, freelancer, prefers sustainable and vegan products.
- ❖ **Challenge:** Finds it difficult to locate eco-friendly options in rural areas.
- ❖ **Value:** Supports businesses that prioritise sustainability and inclusivity.



Resources



Inclusive Marketing: The Ultimate Guide

A comprehensive resource for understanding and implementing inclusive marketing strategies. It talks about the importance of inclusive marketing, challenges and strategies, customer experience and belonging and how to implement and measure your campaign.

How to Make Your Marketing More Accessible

How to Make Your Marketing More Accessible

This site offers practical advice for small businesses aiming to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of their marketing efforts. Provides different approaches and tips for implementation e.g., representation matters, accessibility standards, engaging with diverse communities and being mindful of language and tone.

Resources

The European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA)



The European Advertising Standards Alliance

(EASA) is the single authoritative voice on advertising self-regulation issues in Europe.

Advertising self-regulation helps ensure that ads are legal, decent, honest and truthful and by doing so helps create consumer trust in advertising and in brands.

WFA, the World Federation of Advertisers

WFA's Inclusive Marketing Hub



WFA, the World Federation of Advertisers, is a global peer-to-peer network with some of the world's best marketers, offering a unique source of expertise, inspiration and leadership. Are you looking to make the case for greater diversity & inclusion in your organisation? Are you looking for good practices & case studies in the workplace and creative execution? Or are you looking for something specific, such as on racial or sexual diversity?

SMEs Inclusive Marketing Barriers



Inclusive Marketing Barriers are challenges that prevent SMEs' marketing efforts from being fully accessible or representative of diverse audiences e.g., fear of making mistakes, lack of representation and lack of cultural competence. Addressing these barriers removes obstacles that hinder engagement, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability or background, can access and relate to the content. The section after covers inclusive marketing elements and solutions to overcome these barriers.

First: Why So Many Brands Struggle With Inclusive Marketing

On your inclusive marketing journey, understanding the different inclusive marketing elements is critical. Most SMEs struggle to achieve effective, often unintentionally alienating the very people they aim to include.

These challenges stem from limited perspectives, superficial approaches, and misunderstandings of cultural nuances. To create marketing that truly resonates, brands must intentionally address the obstacles that hinder inclusivity.

By understanding and tackling these common struggles, businesses can build stronger connections, build belonging, and position themselves as authentic allies to underrepresented communities.

Lets first explore the five key areas where brands often face difficulties in inclusive marketing, along with practical solutions and examples to inspire more impactful and inclusive campaigns.



❖ **Identity Blindness:** SMEs often have a limited view of the types of people who make up their ideal customers; their marketing often excludes people they don't intend to.

Solution: Be intentional about identifying the ways in which the people you serve and want to serve are different. Then choose which identities you want to make feel like they belong with your brand.

Example: A fitness brand previously targeting only young, athletic individuals expands its campaigns to include older adults, individuals with disabilities, and non-binary fitness enthusiasts.



❖ **Cultural Distance.** Brands lack customer intimacy, cultural sensitivity, competency and intelligence, leading to tone-deaf or exclusionary campaigns. Customer intimacy in inclusive marketing requires a great degree of cultural intelligence, insights and approaches. When you look at the brands that have publicly struggled with campaigns that aren't inclusive, in almost every situation, it is due to a lack of customer intimacy.

❖ **You can't make people traditionally underrepresented feel seen, supported and like they belong as your customer if you don't know and understand them.**

Solution: It is critical to get intimate and know their dreams, desires, fears, and frustrations at more than a superficial level. You develop a deeper degree of intimacy with the people you serve by spending time with them. By building relationships with them. By talking to and engaging with them.



Solution: It is critical you are aware that cultural intimacy and intelligence doesn't come from just reading a few market research reports that only give insights about demographics, behaviors, and trends of a community group.

Intimacy comes from proximity, conversations, curiosity, and being present with them over time. As a result, you'll learn what issues are important to them. You'll learn what to say. What not to say. How they say things. What frustrates them, what excites them, and so much more.

Example: A coffee chain partners with local LGBTQ+ organisations, hosts events, and uses feedback from these communities to shape marketing campaigns authentically.



- ❖ **Cultural Sensitivities:** Inclusive marketing, while incredibly valuable, presents unique challenges businesses must overcome. Navigating cultural sensitivities is one of the biggest challenges brands face in diversity marketing. Different cultures have varying norms, values, and taboos that can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted. This section delves deeper into this barrier.
- ❖ **Tokenism:** Another major obstacle is avoiding tokenism, where diverse groups are included in marketing efforts solely to appear inclusive. An inclusive brand must be authentic in all messaging, including diverse representations with meaningful engagement and involvement.
- ❖ **A one-size-fits-all approach** doesn't work for all audiences. Brands need to tailor their messaging, imagery, and even product offerings to cater to the specific nuances of each market. Adapting inclusive marketing strategies based on unique needs, preferences, and cultural contexts is imperative.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

Demonstrate a deep understanding of their target audience's diverse needs and challenges.

Create and implement inclusive marketing strategies that build trust and connection with customers.

Identify and overcome barriers such as identity blindness, cultural insensitivity, and tokenism in marketing.

Position their brand as a leader in inclusivity to their customer needs and preferences, enabling loyalty and driving business growth in a diverse marketplace.



Well Done!

Module 5 Part 2

Part 3: Essential Elements For Crafting Inclusive Marketing Campaigns

Part 3 equips participants with the tools and strategies to create marketing campaigns that embrace diversity and align with inclusion principles. It covers six core elements essential for crafting authentic, accessible, and representative campaigns. By applying these elements, participants will learn how to build trust, engage diverse audiences, and drive long-term brand growth.

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