



Visualizing Diversity in Advertising Around the World

How marketers are
thinking about and using
diverse images in their
content and campaigns

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Through the visuals they choose to include

in content and campaigns, marketers play a critical role in influencing how people see themselves and each other. And whether those visuals accurately reflect and represent people of all walks of life has quickly become a hot-button issue. Consumers are paying close attention to the choices marketers make—calling out those that do it right or fall short—and expect more from brands than ever before.

For the third consecutive year, Shutterstock commissioned a study to take a closer look at the state of diversity in advertising and marketing campaign

visuals. Censuswide conducted the research in October 2018, surveying more than 2,500 marketers in Australia, Brazil, Germany, the U.S., and the U.K.¹ Marketers shared their opinions on using diverse imagery in campaigns over the last year, as well as what factors drove their decisions.

Here are a few highlights from the **2018 study**. From a generational and regional perspective, the findings are compelling—and shed a light on who is putting their beliefs into practice.

And for those looking to include more diversity in their own campaigns, we've included some guidance and resources as well.



Countries Surveyed

- U.S. - 505 surveyed
- U.K. - 500 surveyed
- Australia - 506 surveyed
- Germany - 504 surveyed
- Brazil - 502 surveyed

Topics Covered

- Gender in campaigns
- Relationships in campaigns
- Abilities in campaigns
- Race in campaigns

Diversity Themes Included

- Use of diversity in campaigns
- Importance of diverse visuals
- Diversity and brand reputation
- Regulating stereotyping
- Evaluation of efforts

¹ This was an expansion over our 2016 (U.K.) and 2017 (Australia, U.K., U.S.).

Key Findings

1

While many say they expect to use diverse, inclusive visuals in the coming year, Millennial and Gen-Z marketers are the ones actually doing it.

2

When it comes to representing diversity and using more gender neutral pronouns in their advertising, Brazil leads the way.

3

Marketers everywhere we surveyed feel more needs to be done in representing people with disabilities in authentic ways.

4

Following the U.K.'s Advertising Standards Authority Gender Stereotyping rule, marketers in Australia, Brazil, Germany, and the U.S. would support similar regulation preventing gender-stereotyping in their countries as well.

5

Marketers are featuring more diverse people, couples and families in their campaigns and content, but we still have ways to go before it's the norm.

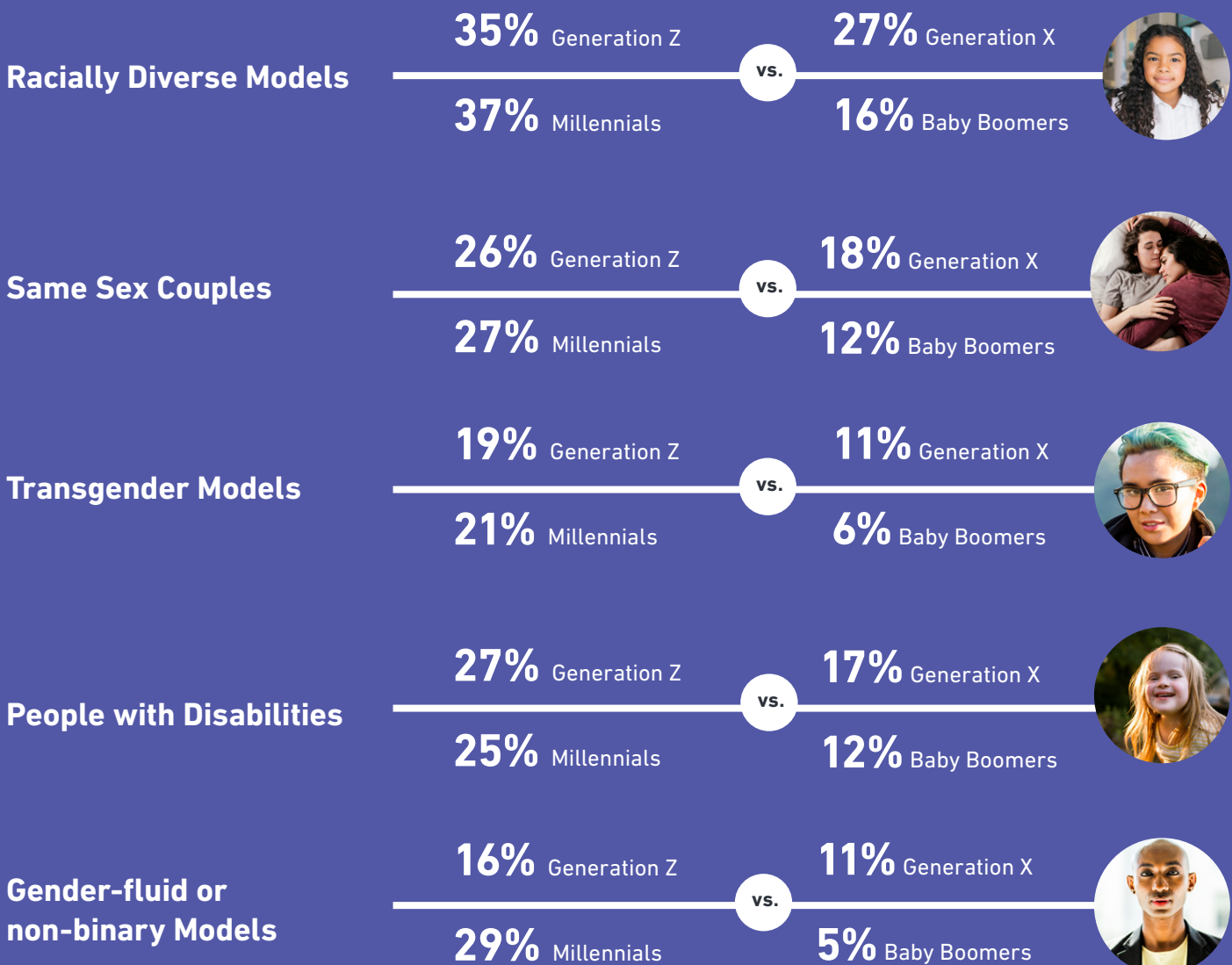


Generational Differences

Everywhere we surveyed, we found that nearly all Generation X (91%) and Millennial (92%) marketers reported they expect to include more diverse representations of people in their campaigns, and 88% of Generation X and 90% of Millennials believe that this helps a brand's reputation.

There is a divide, however, among those who acted on their beliefs about inclusion. While Gen Z and Millennial marketers did use more diverse images within the last year, Generation X and Baby Boomer marketers were less inclined to do so.

In the last 12 months, Marketers started to use images featuring more of the following:



Regional Highlights

When compared to the other marketers we surveyed, Brazilian marketers led the way in using more images featuring racially diverse models, same-sex couples, and people with disabilities.

British marketers were also more inclined to feature gender-fluid, non-binary, or androgynous models as well as real people vs professional models in their campaigns.

Clearly things are moving in a more open-minded diverse direction, and, in all markets we surveyed, there's interest in taking things even further. At least 60% of marketers agreed that regulation similar to the U.K.'s ASA Gender Stereotyping rule—which prevents the use of harmful stereotypes in advertising—should be standard in their countries as well.



International Support for Regulation to Prevent Gender Stereotyping

60%

support regulation in their countries
similar to the U.K.'s ASA rule

Many factors influence a marketers decision to include certain images in their campaigns. And these factors also varied by region. German marketers, for example, consider an emotional reaction and shareability of images most important, Brazilian and Australian marketers were more concerned about the connection between the images and the brand message. British and American marketers choose imagery that best represents the world we live in.

People With Disabilities

While the advertising and marketing world is making strides in visually reflecting the world we live in, many marketers surveyed felt featuring people with disabilities in their campaigns remained a challenge.

In the last year, 32%* of Brazilian marketers said they have started using more images featuring people with disabilities in their campaigns, compared with 25% in the U.K., 20% in the U.S., 18% in Australia, and 13% in Germany.

When it comes to visualizing people with disabilities—both physical and intellectual—it's important to use imagery that normalizes people, avoiding clichés and stereotypical emotions or settings.

The good news: there are brands and marketers who have incorporated people with diverse abilities in their campaigns including Ivy Park, Target, Aerie and in Microsoft's 2019 Super Bowl commercial.



Tips for including people with disabilities in your campaigns:

- Choose visuals that normalize disabilities
- Give equal coverage to all disability types
- Focus on positive emotions and feelings
- Give careful thought around spotlighting
- Choose visuals showing everyday life
- Get inspired by these curated collections on [Shutterstock Premier](#) and [Offset](#)

Diverse People and Relationships

When we looked at the inclusion of racially diverse people and relationships in advertising campaigns, Brazilian marketers were again leading the way,

Nearly half of respondents in Brazil said they had used more images featuring racially diverse models in the last year in their campaigns. British marketers were at 33%, American marketers at 30%, Australian marketers at 28% and German marketers at 20%.

71% of U.S. marketers featuring more imagery of racially diverse models in their campaigns are doing so to more accurately reflect the world we live in.

Follow these creative tips to include more visuals of diverse people and relationships in your campaigns:

- Depict modern life in other countries and cities
- Familiarize yourself with cultural traditions
- Avoid stereotypes and clichés
- Consider all sexual orientations and relationships
- Don't be afraid to show affection
- Pay attention to copy, tone and language
- Get inspired by these curated collection of [Shutterstock Premier](#) and [Offset](#)

For those marketers looking to add more inclusive imagery to campaigns, it's best to start with your audience. Consider how they see themselves and the world, and how you can best reflect that. Choose visuals that feel authentic and relatable—and use universal themes that create personal connections regardless of age, race, abilities, sexual orientation, or gender.

When it comes to showing diverse families and situations, there are brands and marketers setting great examples we can all follow: JP Morgan Chase, Cadillac and Tide², for example, have recently featured multiracial couples or families in campaigns.



² <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/03/business/media/advertising-multiracial-families.html>

Gender Diversity

Anyone following the world of beauty advertising knows that showcasing gender diversity is a hot topic. Brands like Sephora, Cover Girl, Dove and Pantene, for example, have all recently featured transgender models. Gender neutral brands are increasing in popularity, such as like Radimo, Official Rebrand and Rebirth Garments. Coca Cola also got in on the game, using a gender-neutral pronoun in their 2018 Super Bowl commercial.

And while these advances are important and signify trend toward inclusion—the results of our survey show how much more there is to do to better represent our world. In Brazil, the U.K. and the U.S., only 19% of marketers say they are using more images featuring transgender models. Australia and Germany's numbers are even smaller.

Where we have seen a notable change is in terms of language: more marketers are using gender-neutral pronouns.

Gender Neutral Language

% of marketers who said they have started adopting non-gender binary pronouns in campaigns

62% America

68% Brazil

60% United Kingdom

50% Germany

55% Australia

Also worth noting, marketers we surveyed are willing to go a step further. For example, while half of U.K. marketers surveyed agree that gender-neutral advertising could negatively impact their bottom line, 59% of them have started adopting gender-neutral pronouns (e.g. they, them, ze, zir) in their campaigns, and 61% agree gender-neutral imagery in marketing campaigns is necessary.

When seeking imagery that best represents gender, keep in mind the various terms you can search for, and consider using real people for a more authentic, real-life look. Challenging expected gender roles is more important than ever.

Follow these tips to include gender diversity in your campaigns:

- Look for authentic and real life visuals
- Consider using non-professional models
- Think about activities and settings
- Consider visuals that challenge gender roles
- Avoid visuals that stereotype genders
- Be aware of intended and unintended feeling
- Get started with these collections: [Shutterstock Premier](#) and [Offset](#)



**Finding the right inclusive content
can be a challenge but we're here to help.**

Just send your account manager a description of what you're looking for—and our content research team can help you find it. It's a free service for all Shutterstock Premier customers.

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