

Advertising to LGBTQQAAP+ community: More than just Pride Month campaigns

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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While Pride Month is over, brands need to understand that advertising to the LGBTQQAAP+ community is more than just a month-long exercise.



Image supplied. Khangelani Dziba, head of Raprt Creative's PR & Influencer and passionate advocate of gay rights explores advertising to the LGBTQQAAP+ community

The LGBTQQAAP+ community has often been alienated by advertising that has missed the mark.

Khangelani Dziba, head of Raprt Creative's PR & Influencer and passionate advocate of gay rights explores this in-depth in his study *Queer Marginality and Planning for Brand Resonance: A Qualitative analysis of the South African Advertising Industry*.

"I think the root cause is the refusal to realise that the queer community is pluriversal," he says.

"The failure to recognise this fact equates to alienation which results in the mark being missed because it is not reflective of all. As a result, no change is achieved."

This lack of inclusion of multiple voices in the work advertisers produce reflects the community in its entirety. This, he says, arises – probably – because “our work is informed by our own social constructions”.

“These reflect our lived reality and how we have been socialised, and often lead to a particular kind of image of the Queer Community.”

That being said, he believes that there are great improvements and work coming out that is really brave and interesting.

“Examples of this are the Mrs Balls television commercial and the Woolworths Pride Campaign. This was followed by an educational campaign.”

He adds that it is very commendable that Woolworths committed to run this educational campaign throughout the year and not only during Pride Month.

Missing the opportunity to contribute to change

Brands that continually miss the opportunity to include and collaborate with the queer community are missing an opportunity to contribute towards change.

“The reality is, as brands and advertising, we do influence culture and so we should look at how we can meaningfully shape it by being inclusive and diverse in all that we do,” says Dziba.

Avoiding pinkwashing essentially means not appropriating the movement towards the liberation of marginalised people like the LGBTQIAAP+ community.

“Instead, we should be adopting causes that will see the betterment of the lived experiences of those in the community. It is the brand’s responsibility to find out more about the issues afflicting the community and how they can contribute towards challenging the status quo.”



A seat at the table

Collaboration, he says, is incredibly important in unpacking and understanding nuances that are often overlooked when only one perspective is held on any brief.

He quotes Linda Alcof's article titled *The Problem of Speaking for Others* that highlights the danger of alienating those we are trying to advocate for by excluding them in the conversations and solutions being crafted for their course.

"The first thing that brands must always do is give the people they are committing to advocate for a seat at the table where decision-making is made and collaborate with them to craft policies, campaigns, activities and initiatives that will meaningfully make a difference in their lives."

This, he says, is evidenced by the excellent work we saw from Woolworths.

“ It's International Pride Month! 🏳️‍🌈🏳️‍🌈 At Woolies, we celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community year-round, and we're continuously working to better serve our LGBTQIA+ people and customers. pic.twitter.com/8hcf0uOzOi
— Woolworths SA (@WOOLWORTHS_SA) [June 1, 2023](#) ”

More than just a Pride Month campaign

Closely linked to that is ensuring that there no pinkwashing (appropriating the movement for financial gain and not making a real contribution to the community).

"Brands that pinkwash could receive backlash from their core consumer if the subject matter they are advocating for is not authentically aligned to their purpose. Or, from the LGBTQIAAP+ community, which will obviously resent the pinkwashing."

Dziba adds that it is not enough for brands to run a campaign during Pride Month – it should be throughout the year.

"In addition, we could look at how profits and proceeds are used to support the advancement of queer communities through programmes and initiatives that empower, provide safety and are aligned to the direct need of consumers.

Lastly, he says, representation in leadership of organisations is important. "This will allow for the growth and influence towards a positive discourse and cultural practice internally as well as an outward projection that will gain support from the consumer's point of view."

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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