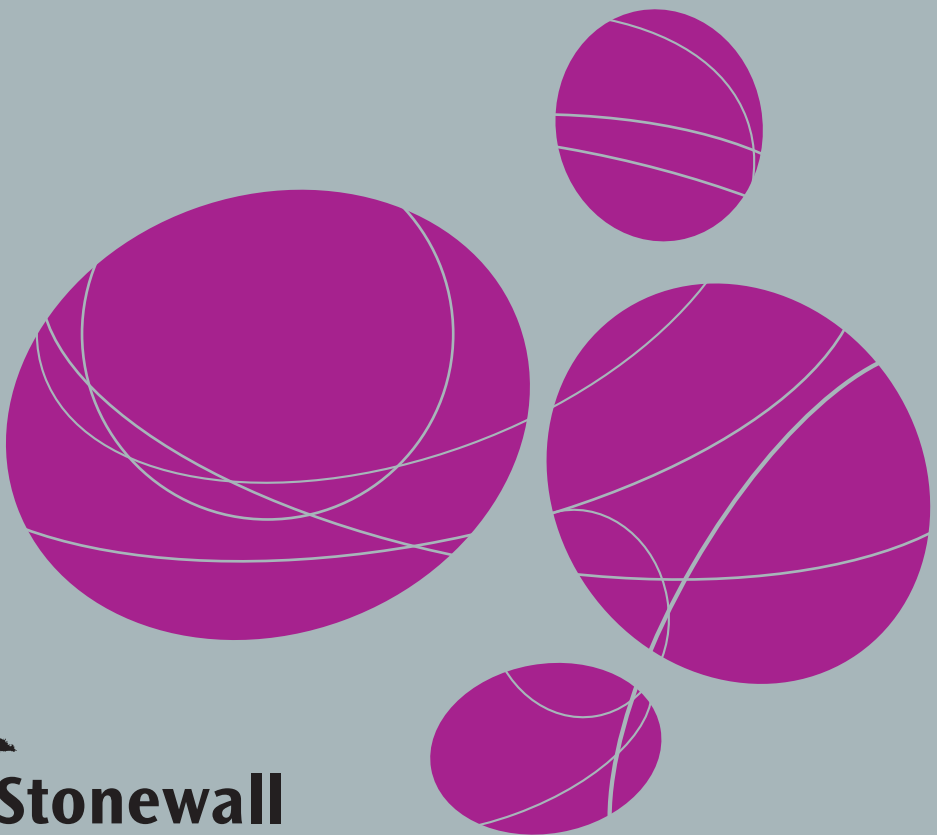


# MARKETING

How to market to gay consumers



**Stonewall**  
WORKPLACE GUIDES

# MARKETING

How to market to gay consumers



**Stonewall**  
WORKPLACE GUIDES

## **MARKETING**

How to market to gay consumers

### **Stonewall**

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Stonewall Workplace Guides

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# FOREWORD

Understanding consumers and communicating effectively with them are both integral to business success.

Yet while Treasury actuaries identify that 3.7 million people in Britain are lesbian, gay or bisexual, gay consumers still remain conspicuously absent from many mainstream marketing and advertising campaigns.

This guide – the latest in a series of Stonewall publications designed to help businesses – profiles pioneering campaigns from leading companies engaging this substantial, and often

affluent, market. It examines the road to success that some businesses have had. It also establishes that one common feature of many of those successful companies is that they have an organisational culture to back up their campaigns and have deployed the priceless resource of their own gay staff in developing and marketing their products and services.

The boycott culture of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s has, for millions of gay people, been succeeded by a more nuanced ‘ethical consumerism’. This means making purchasing decisions, both positive and negative, on the basis of a business’s perceived inclusion of gay consumers in their brand vision.

When businesses get this right, they don’t only secure consumer loyalty from millions of gay people and their friends and families but also from millions more consumers who sense that the relaxed inclusion of gay people in advertising or marketing strategies is a telling sign of a 21st-century product or service.

**Ben Summerskill** Chief Executive, Stonewall

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# INTRODUCTION

This good practice guide is the seventh in a series of workplace guides from Stonewall, Britain's leading lesbian, gay and bisexual equality organisation.

This guide provides practical advice for businesses who want to know how to effectively market their products and services to lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people.

It explores a range of marketing initiatives and highlights the benefits for businesses which decide to implement strategies with gay consumers in mind. The guide also examines the preparation a business needs to take before devising and executing a successful marketing strategy.

The guide is based on research into leading companies in Britain and abroad that are already marketing to and engaging with gay consumers in a variety of ways.

# 1

## CHAPTER

### In this chapter:

- Why implement marketing strategies that target gay people?
- What do these initiatives look like?
- The benefits

# THE BUSINESS CASE

Really successful marketing is when businesses identify, anticipate and satisfy customer needs better than their competitors.

Understanding consumers, communicating effectively to them, and providing products or services that meet their needs are all integral to a successful business.

## Why implement marketing strategies that target gay people?

Businesses stay ahead of their competitors by targeting niche markets. Nearly 1 in 16 consumers across Britain are lesbian, gay or bisexual – this is a sizeable niche market that is often overlooked.

Gay consumers make up a powerful and lucrative consumer group, estimated to be worth between £70-81 billion in Britain alone.

There is evidence that ethical consumerism, where purchasing decisions are based on ethical reasons such as a business's behaviour, has grown rapidly across Britain over the last ten years. According to research carried out for The Co-operative Bank, half of UK adults purchase some products primarily for ethical reasons. Three in five choose some products or services based specifically on a company's behaviour.

Polling evidence from YouGov has found that three in five lesbian, gay and bisexual people – over two million British consumers – are more likely to buy products if they think a company is gay-friendly. Nearly half are more likely to buy products that use images of gay people to sell their products.

Pioneering businesses are seeing the benefits of marketing to gay consumers – Absolut, a vodka brand, detected a measureable uplift in sales as a result of their targeted, multifaceted and consistent campaign in engaging gay audiences.

## What do these initiatives look like?

Gay marketing refers to marketing strategies targeted strictly at gay consumers, such as advertising in media aimed at gay people or offering tailored products or services. However, increasingly gay consumers are being incorporated into businesses' mainstream marketing campaigns, which reach out not only to gay people but to their families and friends, and to cutting-edge consumers who make purchasing decisions based on their ethical lifestyles. Marketing to gay people can also mean businesses aligning themselves with high profile lesbian and gay initiatives.

## The benefits

**STRONG PRESENCE IN A LUCRATIVE MARKET** Businesses that get their marketing and communications strategy right can win the loyalty of lesbian, gay and bisexual consumers, who between them spend £70-81 billion annually.

**BUILDS BRAND REPUTATION AND LOYALTY** Marketing to gay people demonstrates a business's commitment to being fair and inclusive, building their reputation as a leading and progressive employer among gay consumers, their friends, families, and the business's employees and client base. Gay people feel like valued members of the brand vision when incorporated into a business's marketing strategy – something they have not often felt before, which significantly enhances consumer confidence and loyalty.

**ATTRACTING THE EMPOWERED CONSUMER** Half of UK adults purchase some products primarily for ethical reasons. Three in five choose products or services based specifically on a company's behaviour. Lesbian and gay consumers, their family, friends and those who simply care about the behaviour of businesses have the power to take their disposable incomes to those companies who appear to treat gay people fairly.

**BOOSTS RECRUITMENT & RETENTION** Businesses that market their products, services and themselves as employers to gay people send a clear signal that gay people not only exist within the business but that they are valued and included. As a result, businesses benefit from being able to recruit and retain the best people from the widest pool of talent.

**PUBLIC SECTOR BENEFITS** At a time when the efficient use of public sector resources is under scrutiny, public service providers are becoming increasingly concerned to demonstrate that all taxpayers are targeted by their services. Marketing to gay people is a clear indicator of an organisation's commitment to considering the needs of their gay service users and employees.



## 2 CHAPTER

### In this chapter:

- Incorporating gay people in mainstream campaigns
- Tailoring products or services to meet the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual consumers
- Engaging or advertising in 'pink' media
- Engaging with gay communities

## Incorporating gay people in mainstream campaigns

An increasing number of businesses are incorporating lesbian and gay people into their mainstream print, online and broadcast marketing campaigns. This not only reaches the target group of consumers – gay people – but also a wider audience of friends, family and ethical consumers. In these campaigns, gay people are incorporated in an everyday manner that doesn't sensationalise gay or lesbian sexual orientation.

In 2009 **Lloyds TSB** were named Britain's Top Employer for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index and in 2010 they began to explore ways they could engage with their gay customers and potential customers. This led Lloyds TSB to be the first financial services company in the UK to include an image of a gay couple in a mainstream advertising campaign for its saving products. The business recognises that gay people are an integral, valuable part of their workforce and customer base. There has been an overwhelming positive reception both externally and internally to the campaign, generating much 'pink' media attention and online viral activity.

# We can help you save to turn your house into your dream home.



If you're thinking of saving for the important things in life, like home improvements, we can help you do just that. From a new kitchen to re-decorating the whole house, whatever you're saving for, we have a range of ways to help you make your house your perfect home.

Lloyds TSB is pleased to help our LGBT customers with their savings needs.

Visit us in branch or call 0800 056 0025



official partner



**Lloyds TSB** | for the journey...

We may monitor or record calls in case we need to check we have carried out your instructions correctly and to help improve our quality of service. Lloyds TSB Bank plc Registered office: 25 Gresham Street, London EC2 7HN. Lloyds TSB Scotland plc Registered office: Henry Duncan House, 120 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4UH.

The US based financial services company and personal bank **Wells Fargo** launched a print campaign across the US in 2009 with the tagline 'When Two Accounts Become One'. One advert featured two women at home sitting together with their laptop and another featured two men food shopping together. The implication in both adverts is that they are couples. There is no specific mention of gay equality, but the ad sent an explicit message recognising the diversity of their customer base and promising to help all customers to save, plan and prepare for their future, regardless of sexual orientation.

Businesses commonly use celebrity endorsements in marketing campaigns. Featuring a celebrity widely known to be gay is another way in which a broader campaign can also speak directly to lesbian and gay people.

In 2004 **L'Oréal** signed Kyan Douglas of 'Queer Eye for the Straight Guy' as their spokesperson and consultant. Douglas became the cosmetics makers' spokesperson for all categories: cosmetics, skincare and hair products for both women and men. Douglas played a role in advising and educating consumers and was consulted on new product development. Using openly gay endorsers for both general and gay market advertising has helped L'Oreal achieve success in the gay market, which remains a key priority for the business.

**Royal Mail** ran a Christmas advertising campaign in 2001 promoting its Packetpost delivery service. The commercial featured Sir Elton John admiring products on his computer screen. He then became quickly frustrated by his inability to access the products immediately. Dozens of postmen then burst into his house with brown paper parcels. The advert aimed to demonstrate that two thirds of all online purchases are delivered by Royal Mail.

Alongside more natural incorporation of gay people in mainstream campaigns, businesses also expressly reference gay sexual orientation in campaigns to appeal to gay consumers.



Since 2004 **American Express** has featured Ellen DeGeneres in its US 'My life. My card' ad campaign. The campaign offers a glimpse into Ellen's personal life and ambitions and has been run in print, online and adapted for a TV commercial. The TV spot entitled 'Animals' saw her fulfilling her childhood ambition of working with animals and was aired in the US in 2006. Ellen's endorsement enables American Express to establish an emotional connection with both gay and straight people and encourages consumers to learn more about American Express products and services.

In 2008, **Pepsi** launched an advert across the UK, which saw two men in a bar encourage their friend to chat to a woman. The man drank PepsiMAX for confidence to walk past one woman, then past another – model Kelly Brook – until he finally approaches a man at the end of the bar to the visible surprise of his friends. The advert engaged the audience by playing with the assumption of heterosexuality. The film was also used for online ads and activity across a number of digital media channels including Facebook, Sky Sports network, FHM and on the PepsiMAX web and mobile sites.



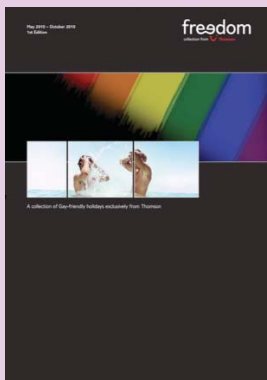
In 2007, **IKEA** ran a TV advert titled 'Living Room' that aired across America and included a collage of diverse families in their respective living rooms. The final shot was of an affectionate gay male couple sitting up against their sofa with their loving daughter as the voiceover says 'Why shouldn't sofas come in flavours, just like families?'. In a 2009 TV advert that aired in the UK for IKEA's new catalogue, a man had come home to find that various things in his flat had changed. The final shot revealed a woman, his former partner, cooking dinner for a new partner, a woman, as writing appeared across the screen that said 'It's change time'.

In 2010, **McDonald's** aired its 'Come as you are' commercial in France. In the ad, a teenage boy gazes at a class photo featuring his boyfriend, whilst telling his partner on the phone he 'misses him'. The father returned to the table from the McDonald's counter and said to his son that it's a shame that he's at a boys' college as otherwise he'd have all the girls chasing him. The boy smiles in response and the ad finished with the slogan 'Come as you are'. The ad was added to YouTube where a single stream has recorded over two million hits.

## Tailoring products or services to meet the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual consumers

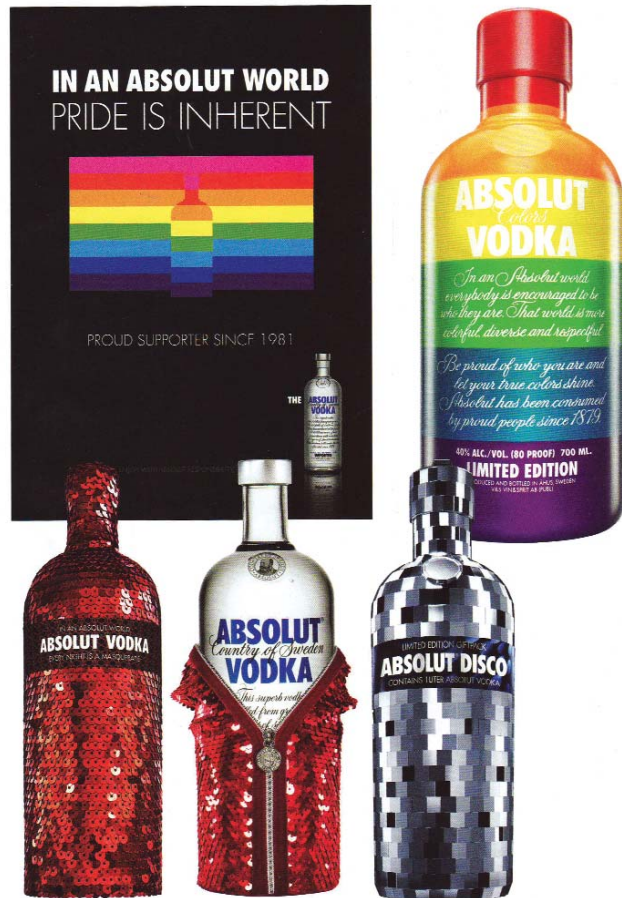
Businesses can attract gay consumers through product adaptation, where additional products are developed to respond to the specific needs or tastes of lesbian and gay consumers. By investing in specific products and services, brands are demonstrating a genuine interest in that consumer group and can benefit from the long-term relationship that develops. Furthermore, it engages the consumer with the business's wider offering, making him or her more likely to try and recommend other products and services in the company portfolio. Evidence indicates that gay consumers are more likely to keep up with the latest trends than their heterosexual counterparts – making them an ideal target group to introduce new products to.

In 2005, **The Co-operative Funeralcare** worked with the Pink Weddings family and looked at the experiences of their gay customers. They found that gay clients can be particularly worried when making funeral arrangements as they perceive the funeral industry lacks progressive thinking around sexual orientation. In response, The Co-operative formed a link with Pink Partings, part of the Pink Weddings family. The Pink Partings website offers a service designed specifically for gay people arranging the funeral of a partner or for themselves. It provides a safe space where lesbian and gay people can be assured that they will not be judged during a time when support is needed the most.



**Thomson** created its Freedom Collection of holidays and launched an e-brochure in January 2010 after recognising the need to offer their gay customers more choice and more security. The collection means that gay customers can be assured that all its hotels have the GayComfort seal of approval. GayComfort is an online accreditation programme, which means that frontline hotel staff have received training to ensure the avoidance of incidents such as the assumption that a same-sex couple might want twin beds rather than a double.





attitude.co.uk 27

**ABSOLUT** was one of the earliest brands to directly engage with gay consumers through community-specific advertising and promotions. Some of their campaigns focused on changing the design of the bottle to appeal more to gay consumers. This included a limited edition rainbow design bottle to mark the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall riots and to celebrate four decades of gay pride, alongside its 'NO LABEL' bottle that was designed to challenge prejudice.

## Engaging and advertising in 'pink' media

Advertising in 'pink' media – media primarily for and about lesbian, gay and bisexual people – both online and in print is one way for businesses to directly access and engage gay consumers. Simply including 'pink' media outlets in your distribution list for press releases is another way to increase coverage of your brand's products and services amongst gay audiences.

Businesses should be clear that they are able to demand of 'pink' media outlets the same standards that they would apply to mainstream media such as verification of circulation and that comment boards are appropriately moderated.

Often businesses simply run the exact same advertising campaign in 'pink' media that they are also using in mainstream media to sell their services or products.

**Ford** promoted the Ford Kuga in the Pride Beside the Sea brochure in conjunction with the Brighton Pride event. Additionally, Ford advertises in gay web-based media such as [gaydar.co.uk](http://gaydar.co.uk) and has also advertised in specialist publications such as *Gay Times*, *Attitude* and *Refresh*. Ford considers this to be a key way to connect with gay consumers and recognises that as a result of these campaigns the company's external profile has been raised and its reputation as an employer of choice has also subsequently been enhanced.

Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km): Ford Kuga 2.0 16v Diesel DPF (330PS) 2WD: urban 56.7 (7.7), extra urban 55.4 (6.5), combined 46.3 (6.5). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emission 155g/km. These stated values in extra urban cycle (which should be the Ford Kuga 2.0 16v Diesel DPF (330PS) 2WD) are not valid.

Designed from a blank canvas, the new Kuga 2WD not only saves fuel with an impressive 55.4mpg, it also saves you pounds with its 'on the road' price tag. Achieving CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of just 155g/km it's a breath of fresh air all round. Visit [www.newkuga.co.uk](http://www.newkuga.co.uk)

**Ford Kuga 2WD** | Feel the difference

For information on the Government scrappage scheme visit [www.ford.co.uk/scrappage](http://www.ford.co.uk/scrappage)

**Ford**

Less fuel consumption.  
Less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.  
Less money.  
What more could you want?



**London 2012** advertised in the June 2010 edition of Fyne Times to celebrate being two years away from the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. The advert encourages the UK public to plan their Games to ensure they get the most of the Olympics.

**Deloitte** are a sponsor of the Royal Opera House who host the annual Deloitte Ignite Event, a contemporary arts festival. In 2009, Deloitte promoted the weekend finale by featuring in Attitude online where viewers were able to click on a link through to Deloitte's Facebook page which supplied information on the services they provide.

Brands sometimes tailor the message or imagery of their general marketing to sit within 'pink' media. The most effective of these strategies are those that have carefully considered the message the campaign sends and the visuals it utilises. To connect with gay consumers these strategies use adverts that are creative and avoid tokenistic imagery and negative stereotypes. Getting it wrong risks putting across the message that a brand has failed to understand the needs and wants of gay people.

The most successful campaigns have been those that have delivered the message of being gay-friendly explicitly. Gay consumers can detect if an advert intended for a straight audience is being used to advertise to a gay market, which sends the message that the brand is not willing to pledge its full commitment to gay people.

In 2005, **L'Oreal Paris** introduced its Men's Expert skin care line to target both gay and heterosexual men. The campaign introduced the brand into gay and mainstream markets across the UK and US. In Britain the advert appeared in gay magazine Attitude, a handsome man carries the headline, 'You think you look the business. He thinks you look overworked.'

**ABSOLUT NO LABEL** was a unique limited edition naked bottle, launched to coincide with a campaign called 'In An ABSOLUT World There Are No Labels', an initiative which challenged prejudice against LGB&T minorities by encouraging consumers to discard their labels and look beyond the obvious in order to make the world a more diverse, vibrant and respectful place. A partnership with Attitude magazine in both print and digital format was struck. The print ad featured on page one of the magazine alongside a duplication of the magazine's front cover on the inside cover minus the Attitude title and all of its labels. The same concept was worked online, with the Attitude logo on its homepage dissolving into the 'NO LABEL' message.



# IN AN ABSOLUT WORLD THERE ARE NO LABELS

DRINK AWARE.CO.UK

[www.absolut.co.uk/nolabel](http://www.absolut.co.uk/nolabel)

Enjoy ABSOLUT responsibly

ABSOLUT® Vodka Product of Sweden. ABSOLUT, ABSOLUT VODKA COUNTRY OF SWEDEN & Logo and ABSOLUT Bottle Designs are trademarks owned by V&S Vin & Sprit AB



**Domestic violence. The fiction:**

"I can get away with beating up my partner because the law only protects straight people."



**Domestic violence. The facts:**

Domestic violence within lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships occurs as regularly as within heterosexual relationships. The police will pursue anyone who abuses their partner and arrest them, even when the victim refuses to make a statement or give evidence in court.



Working together for a safer London

The **Metropolitan Police** released a print ad in 2005 to raise awareness of the occurrence of domestic violence in lesbian, gay and bisexual relationships. The ad appeared in *The Pink Paper*, *Boyz*, *QX*, *Gay Times* and *Diva* and it was also reproduced as an A3 and A4 poster and distributed by officers locally. The ad reinforced the Metropolitan Police's commitment to pursue and arrest perpetrators of domestic violence and aimed to encourage more gay people to come forward and report these crimes. The Metropolitan Police wanted gay people to be assured that the police would deal with the report safely and to know that they could request to speak to specially trained officers across London.

# Engaging with gay communities

Businesses that successfully build loyalty amongst gay people invest back into gay communities. Businesses that actively reach out to engage gay people in a meaningful way benefit from increased understanding of these markets, which helps inform future out-reach campaigns. These activities raise the brand profile not only amongst gay consumers but their friends and family too.

## **Initiatives to engage with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities**

- include:**
- Sponsorship of local, national, and/or international events
  - Product placement and/or give-aways at events
  - Hosting launch events in gay venues
  - Presence in online gay communities

Partnering with community organisations which have a significant new media presence can offer businesses direct access to an established gay audience. For example, Stonewall has almost 20,000 monthly e-bulletin readers, over 16,000 Facebook friends and 5,000 Twitter followers, and over 600 member organisations representing 5 million employees across Britain.

To launch the Freedom Collection, **Thomson** ran a launch night in a gay venue in London, which attracted over 40 pieces of advertorial activity both online and offline with national newspapers also picking up on the event. They utilised guerrilla marketing activities to engage gay consumers, which included an online model search and a presence at London Pride with models carrying the 'Freedom' branding on their chests pushing out flyers. Thomson Freedom also took out advertising in Boyz, G3 and Attitude magazine and provided product give-aways at gay venues.

Brands **Easyjet** and **Schweppes** have targeted the online community, placing their ad campaigns on popular blogs amongst gay people, AfterEllen.com and AfterElton.com. Schweppes ran a high profile campaign on the AfterEllen website in August 2010, where clicking on the banner drove traffic through to the Schweppes microsite where the consumer was encouraged to buy a bottle of 'Abbey Well' and claim a free swim at participating pools across Britain.

**Barclays** take a sustained and multi-faceted approach to engaging gay communities. They sponsor the Euro Gay Sailing Regatta and Stonewall Football Club (a team set up in 1991 to encourage gay men to play competitive football). They have also sponsored Stonewall's groundbreaking research into homophobia in football and have supported Stonewall in the production of 'Get Hitched! A Guide to Civil Partnership'. This included the promotion of its content and ran a roadshow of events in Brighton, Birmingham, London and Manchester aimed at helping gay people to understand how their personal and financial relationships may be affected.

**American Express** has supported the Stonewall Brighton Equality Walk for four years, providing branded t-shirts, goody bags and water bottles. American Express held adverts in the gay and local press, their logo was clearly displayed on the Stonewall website and Facebook page, and they were also recognised for providing the top fundraising prize. Online advertising was also placed on Real City Network sites and numerous event listings. Aligning their brand with a reputable organisation like Stonewall allowed American Express to reach an extensive existing network of gay people and potential consumers.

As part of its talent search **Simmons & Simmons LLP** wanted to engage better with gay university students. The leading solicitor's network sponsored the 'Q-Ball' organised by the Durham University LGB&T network. The 'Q-Ball' is the only such event in the North East and is attended by students and alumni from Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria and Teeside Universities. Simmons & Simmons LLP sponsored the event to demonstrate the support of the legal sector for gay issues in one of the key universities where they recruit. Their branding was on the tickets and website for the event.

# 3

## CHAPTER

- In this chapter:**
- Getting your house in order
  - Senior support
  - Researching gay markets
  - Consultation with gay people
  - Making sure you can deliver what you promise
  - Internal communications

# HOW TO GET THERE

## Getting your house in order

Polling evidence from YouGov has found that three in five lesbian, gay and bisexual people are more likely to buy products if they think a company is gay-friendly. An inclusive culture demonstrates the business's commitment to gay equality and builds brand reputation, which gives further confidence to gay consumers accessing a product or service.

In 1999, United Airlines introduced its first gay specific print adverts which were featured in 'pink' media. Shortly after the airline was involved in a lawsuit for failing to comply with legislation that required employers to offer equal benefits to employees' domestic partners. This led to a boycott, which sent business to United's competitors – American Airlines – and undermined the company's efforts to position itself as a gay-friendly service provider.

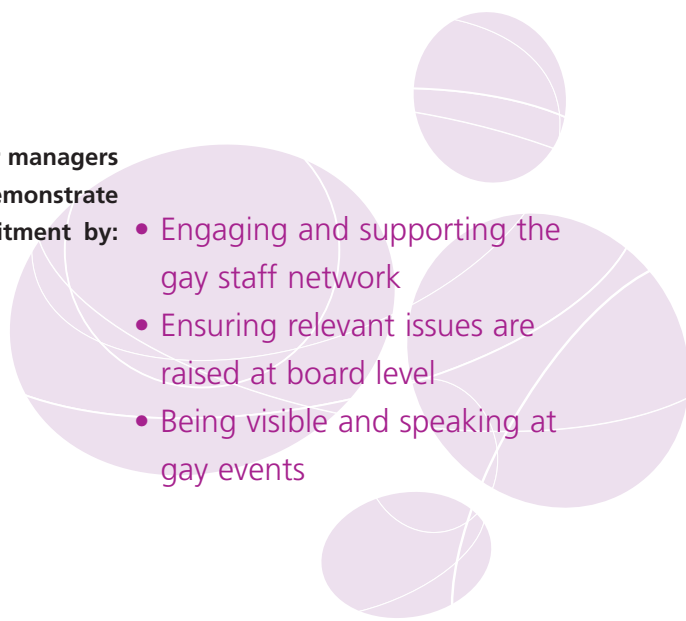
Employers can take the following steps to ensure an inclusive culture for their gay employees:

- Incorporate sexual orientation in equalities policies
- Train staff on diversity issues which include sexual orientation
- Ensure senior managers speak out on the importance of gay equality
- Encourage senior 'out' gay role models to be visible
- Support an LGB employee network group
- Become a member of Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme and participate in the Workplace Equality Index
- Include sexual orientation in equalities monitoring
- Ensure robust policies and practice are in place to report and respond to homophobic bullying and harassment

Prior to engaging with gay customers through direct marketing activities, **Lloyds TSB** spent time developing the bank's sexual orientation strategy, which focused firstly on staff. Once progress on internal policy and practice was evident, Lloyds TSB felt able to extend their strategy to include community involvement and direct engagement with gay people to reinforce their message of commitment to gay equality to the wider population.

## Senior support

It is important to ensure that the board and those at the most senior levels in the business are committed to the gay specific marketing strategy. It is also important to ensure that senior managers are aware of sexual orientation issues within the workplace and understand why the business is undertaking targeted marketing initiatives. This will enable senior managers to confidently tackle questions on the business's initiatives both internally and externally.



**Senior managers  
can demonstrate  
commitment by:**

- Engaging and supporting the gay staff network
- Ensuring relevant issues are raised at board level
- Being visible and speaking at gay events

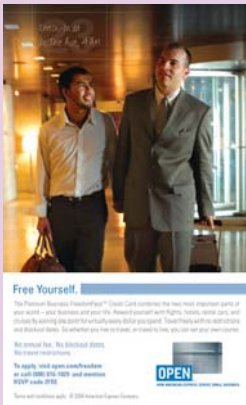
The Former Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Brian Paddick, was invited to speak as part of **Deloitte's** Diversity Month. The CEO of Deloitte hosted the event to demonstrate his leadership support. The event attracted over 100 Deloitte employees and 70 clients and raised the profile of gay issues while strengthening relationships across the business. Its success meant the activity will be repeated as part of 2010's Diversity Month, with openly gay rugby player Gareth Thomas confirmed as the high profile speaker.

## Researching gay markets

As with any other target market, successful marketing to gay people is dependent upon how well the business understands their needs and wants and delivers accordingly.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not a homogenous group and sometimes different messages need to be employed to reach the intended demographic. For example, targeting lesbians with imagery of a gay male couple may not be effective. Mainstream companies can speak to this market, for example, by producing separate adverts or by tailoring images or messages to reach gay women.





American Express in the US launched its 'Free Yourself' print campaign in 2006 in the gay media across the US to promote its Platinum Business FreedomPass. It ran two versions of the ad, one version featured a gay male couple checking into a hotel and the other featured a gay female couple getting ready to go out. By representing both genders in its advertising campaigns, American Express made sure it spoke to both gay women and men.

Companies that have reaped the largest benefit from targeted marketing are those that have conducted research with consumers in order to understand their needs and preferences. This also includes identifying the best route to gay customers by understanding where they live, the venues and events they attend and the most popular media accessed by that audience. Businesses can look to the marketing opportunities that social networking communities present such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs and Flickr.

**Thomson** utilised social networking tools such as Facebook not only as a route to market but also to capture further information about gay people's preferences around travel such as popular destinations. The page now has over 2,000 fans and their comments help shape the future of the Freedom Collection – an e-brochure designed specifically for gay customers.

Leading businesses undertake research into how other companies are already connecting with lesbian and gay people by looking at adverts in the local and national gay media to see what works.

## Consultation with gay people

Leading businesses often undertake consultation exercises with key lesbian, gay and bisexual people. A gay staff network group can prove to be a hugely powerful resource, as can customers and community groups. In addition to offering advice on internal policy and practice decisions, these groups can also play a vital role in advising on a business's marketing plan. They can act as an advisory board that works with marketing and product teams to help develop gay products/services and provide feedback on the planned communications strategy.

At **Barclays**, the LGB&T network group, **Spectrum**, works with marketing and product teams to review how to attract the 'pink pound' and engage gay consumers. Spectrum liaise with Barclays retail branches for pride events to support staff and raise awareness about service delivery to gay customers.

## Making sure you can deliver what you promise

Leading companies take steps to ensure their frontline staff can provide the inclusive service for gay people that their marketing promises. This can be done through initiatives like training that raises awareness of the issues that lesbian and gay people face when accessing their products or services.

Equalities training for all staff that includes sexual orientation issues will ensure employees across the business understand their role in creating an inclusive culture for gay colleagues and customers.

The management team at **The Co-operative Funeralcare**, which established the link with Pink Partings in 2005, all underwent training in relation to diversity matters and all staff sign up to the diversity policy which runs across The Co-operative family of businesses. The Co-operative Funeralcare business challenges assumptions and suggests appropriate use of language, for example using gender neutral nouns when first enquiring about the gender of the deceased. Role-play scenarios are also utilised with staff as part of The Co-operative's nationwide training to ensure that all employees treat clients and colleagues with respect.

## Internal communication

Brands that have successfully connected with gay people have taken the time to understand both their own values and beliefs and those of gay consumers. Leading businesses are able to clearly articulate why they are including lesbian and gay people in their marketing and product strategies and communicate this to all staff.

Prior to the release of its mainstream ad campaign featuring a gay couple, Helen Weir, the executive sponsor of the sexual orientation strategy at **Lloyds TSB**, revealed the advert at the launch of the staff LGB&T network (Rainbow). 120 people were invited to the launch including business and human resources leaders from all divisions and functions, fifteen of Lloyds most senior LGB&T managers, Rainbow members and their line managers, supporters and members of the 'pink' media. The ad and launch activity was announced to all colleagues the day after the advert's release to raise awareness of Lloyds TSB's strategy to focus on LGB&T customers and to further build upon the bank's positive profile in LGB&T communities.

# 4

## CHAPTER

- In this chapter:**
- Measure success
  - Respond to negative reactions
  - Stay consistent

### Measure success

By measuring the impact of marketing campaigns these companies are capturing almost instant feedback on the success of their initiatives, which can help inform the business with regards to return on investment and shape future communications to gay consumers. Businesses can also collect quantitative and qualitative marketing research through surveys and focus groups.

**ABSOLUT** measured sales prior to the launch of its 'NO LABEL' bottle, during the promotion and in the period after, across venues in the UK. ABSOLUT were able to detect a measurable uplift as a result of the promotional campaign and further recognise the importance of remaining consistent in their approach to reaching gay people, given the relationship that has developed over the years between the brand and gay consumers.

**Barclays Marine Finance** sponsors the Euro Gay Sailing Regatta. The Marine Finance team report back to senior management on the number of clients obtained from the event. Sponsorship of the Regatta has resulted in increased product sales for the teams and the success of the event ensures that the initiative is repeated each year.

## Respond to negative reactions

Marketing activities can occasionally receive negative reactions. Leading businesses ensure they understand the rationale behind their marketing to gay consumers in order to tackle any potential 'backlash' effectively. Businesses can struggle to respond if they are not clear about the rationale for targeting gay audiences.

Heinz released a TV advert in the UK in 2008. The advert included a New York male deli chef who plays the role of 'mum' making sandwiches for the two children and dad. At the end of the advert the deli chef says 'aren't you forgetting something' to the dad and at that point the two men kiss goodbye. The advert was only broadcast for a week when Heinz withdrew the commercial after a number of people complained the advert was offensive and inappropriate. Heinz's quick decision to pull the advert resulted in a boycott of the brand by both gay and straight people.

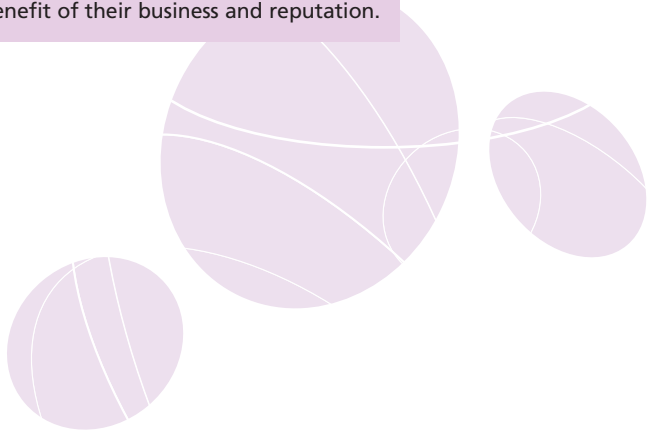
Following the release of **Pepsi's** advert in the UK where a man chose to bypass the attractive women in the bar to talk to the man at the end, a US pressure group staged a boycott of Pepsi. The pressure group called for Pepsi to 'remain neutral in the culture war over homosexuality'. Pepsi made a statement on the group website to say it would continue to provide financial support to gay organisations that seek to legalise gay marriage in the US. PepsiCo's Director of Public Policy, Paul Boykas, promoted Pepsi's inclusive and respectful workplace culture and confirmed it would be making a donation of \$500,000 both to the American gay equality groups – The Human Rights Campaign and Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

## Stay Consistent

Companies that have stayed consistent in this market and continue to invest in their commercial relationships with gay people are reaping the rewards.

**Ford** recognises the need to maintain its longstanding commitment to the principle and practice of equal opportunities amongst its workforce and has remained a sponsor of Brighton Pride and an LGB football tournament. These activities have raised the external profile of the business and have had a positive impact upon Ford's gay employees and in attracting new staff.

**Barclays** are proud of the sustained approach they take to improving and maximising the services they offer gay customers. Their annual sponsorship of events such as the Euro Gay Sailing Regatta and the Brighton Pride community village has raised their profile among lesbian and gay people to the benefit of their business and reputation.



# TEN STEPS TO MARKETING TO GAY CONSUMERS

- 1 Incorporate gay people into your mainstream campaigns – this reaches gay people, their friends and family, and ethical consumers who are guided by the behaviour of a business when choosing where to spend their money.
- 2 Research the needs and preferences of your lesbian, gay and bisexual consumers to identify opportunities for tailored products or services that will engage gay people with your wider business.
- 3 Consult with your gay staff network group, service users and community groups – these groups can work with marketing and product teams to help develop communications strategies.
- 4 Consider your visuals. Gay people are young, old, male and female. Different approaches may be needed to reach all gay consumers. Tokenistic imagery or visuals that ambiguously try to appeal to gay consumers rather than being explicit about including gay people ring hollow.
- 5 Engage with gay communities by supporting and aligning yourself with local and national community groups and/or events.

6

Ensure you can deliver what you promise – businesses that pitch themselves as gay-friendly should be able to back this up. Make sure your frontline staff are trained to deliver an inclusive service and ensure your equalities policies equally apply to gay employees.

7

Senior leaders in the business should be engaged and on board with marketing initiatives targeted at gay consumers. They are key to ensuring all staff are on board and should be able to confidently discuss the marketing campaign internally and externally.

8

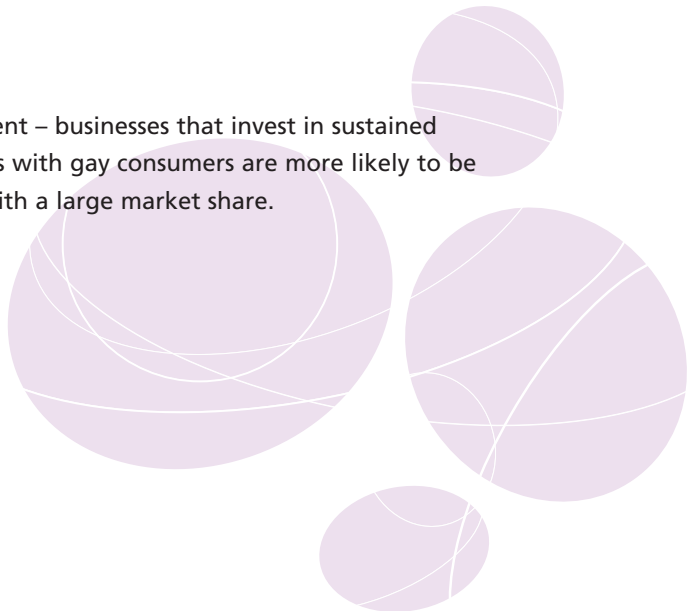
Measure success of outreach campaigns amongst gay consumers and use this to develop future initiatives.

9

Respond robustly to any negative reactions to maintain the loyalty of gay consumers.

10

Stay consistent – businesses that invest in sustained relationships with gay consumers are more likely to be rewarded with a large market share.





## Pink media cited:

- [Gaydar.co.uk](http://Gaydar.co.uk)
- [Gay Times](http://GayTimes.com)
- [Attitude](http://Attitude.com)
- [Fyne Times](http://FyneTimes.com)
- [The Pink Paper](http://ThePinkPaper.com)
- [Boyz](http://Boyz.com)
- [QX](http://QX.com)
- [Diva](http://Diva.com)
- [G3](http://G3.com)
- [AfterEllen.com](http://AfterEllen.com)
- [AfterElton.com](http://AfterElton.com)
- [Refresh](http://Refresh.com)
- [Real City Network](http://RealCityNetwork.com)

## Stonewall Diversity Champions programme

Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme is Britain's good practice forum through which employers can work with Stonewall, and each other on sexual orientation issues to promote diversity in the workplace. [www.stonewall.org.uk/dcs](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/dcs)

## Workplace Equality Index

The Workplace Equality Index is Stonewall's comprehensive annual benchmarking exercise that showcases Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. [www.stonewall.org.uk/wei](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/wei)

## The Stonewall Leadership Programme

The Stonewall Leadership Programme provides a unique space to look at questions around sexual orientation and authenticity, and how these can be used to develop an individual's leadership abilities. [www.stonewall.org.uk/leadership](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/leadership)

## Also in this series of Workplace Guides:

Network Groups

Monitoring

Bullying

Career Development

Religion and Sexual Orientation

Bisexual people in the workplace

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**MARKETING**