

Should Brands Protest or Celebrate with Pride? The Impact of Representation Format on Consumer Responses to Pride Branding

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Abstract

Brands increasingly stand up for societal issues. One example is through Pride branding, where brands take the opportunity to adopt values and cues that highlight their support for the LGBTQ+ Pride movement. Communication efforts may take a range of representation formats from the Pride spectrum being both a protest and a celebration. While the prevalence of celebration representations in brand-related content on social media (Twitter) is higher than protest representations, the latter results in higher engagement. Two subsequent pre-registered online experiments demonstrate that protest (vs. celebration) representations generate stronger perceptions of identity relevance across sexual orientations (both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+), with positive downstream effects on ad attitudes. The findings suggest that protest representations create more favorable responses, with identity relevance constituting one possible mechanism for this interplay.

Keywords: *LGBTQ+; Pride; identity*

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