

**ANA**

**LGBTQ+**

**MARKETING INCLUSION**

**MARCH 2024**





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## BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

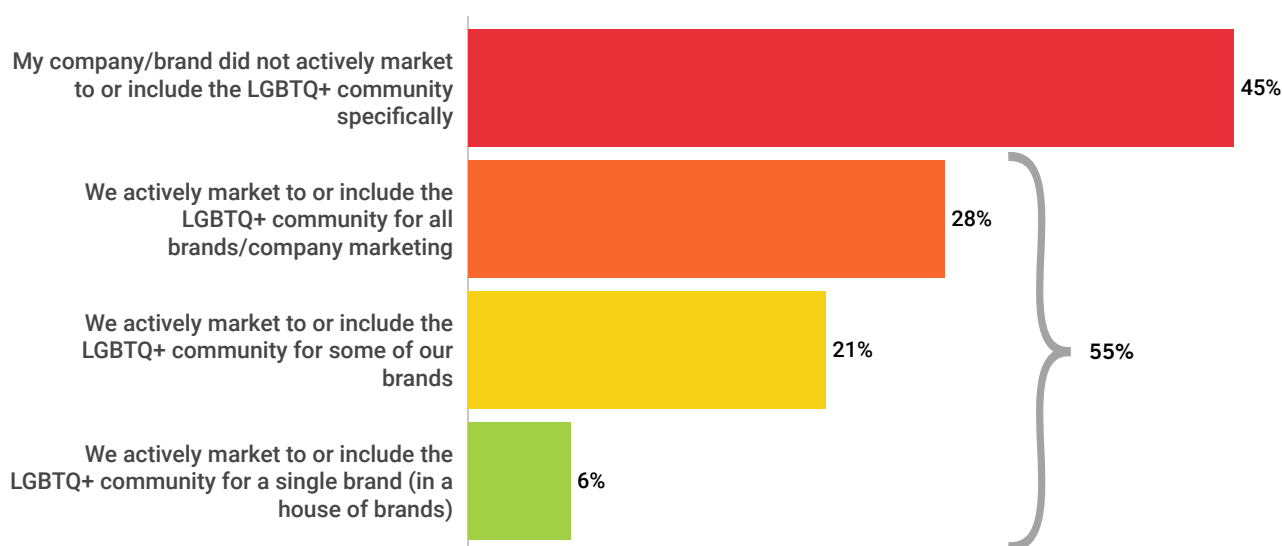
As a follow-up to the [2021 ANA LGBTQ+ Marketing Inclusion Report](#), the ANA set out to understand the state of LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion and representation among advertisers/client-side marketer members of the ANA. The first report, in December 2021, showed that while some brands embraced the LGBTQ+ community in their advertising, there was still a lot of room for growth. Additionally, there was concern that some advertisers were rainbow-washing just to appeal to the LGBTQ+ community.

Through August and September 2023, the ANA surveyed its advertiser/client-side marketer members to understand the breadth of LGBTQ+-inclusive advertising and support for the community overall. In total, 101 advertisers participated in this survey and provided perspectives on key issues. The survey focused on LGBTQ+ representation in creative, placement of that creative, the timing of LGBTQ+ campaigns, the benefits and challenges of inclusive marketing, overall industry support, and measurement. A copy of the survey may be accessed [online](#).

Respondents were first asked to identify if over the past year their company or brand(s) actively marketed to or included the LGBTQ+ community in their marketing. We found that 55 percent of respondents actively marketed to or included the LGBTQ+ community in their marketing in the past year.

## Percentage of ANA Members with Inclusive Marketing

Base: 101



## ANA Growth Agenda

This report builds upon the work of the CMO Growth Council, which was established by the ANA and Cannes Lions to focus on driving enterprise growth. The CMO Growth Council has identified four global growth priorities and a 12-point industry growth agenda. This work is an important initiative for the Society and Sustainability priority, as well as the Talent and Marketing Organization priority of the ANA Growth Agenda, which provides a guide for the industry to leverage marketing as a sustainable growth driver. Marketers today must adapt their brand and marketplace strategies to leverage demographic changes and champion diversity. At the heart of any diversity discussion are inclusion and equity — a state of mind that must be continually nurtured, whether by providing unquestionably fair and equal opportunities for all, ensuring accessibility across all aspects of the organization, or employing more diverse and representative agency partners.

### ANA Growth Agenda



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year the ANA surveys its members for their input on the Marketing Word of the Year. In 2022, [the ANA Marketing Word of the Year](#) was Inclusion. The year prior, members voted [Diversity as the word of the year](#). Clearly, the focus for the advertising industry through recent years has been on diversity and inclusion. We have seen great strides of representation in creative, employment, and advertising spend. However, there is still much work to be done, as evidenced by the events of 2023.

Cultural tensions increased in the U.S. through the start of 2023, and we saw them spill into advertising. There was a wave of boycotts against brands and advertisers for marketing tactics that embraced the LGBTQ+ community. In response, some of these brands reduced or rescinded their support for the LGBTQ+ community. This sent shockwaves through the advertiser and LGBTQ+ communities.

The 2023 ANA LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion survey was fielded in August and September, after much of the media coverage over these boycotts had ended. The survey results indicate some positive progress toward greater inclusion and a focus from brands on being authentic supporters of the community. In the 2021 report, we identified the top challenge preventing advertisers from being more inclusive as “concerned we’ll get it wrong” (50 percent). In 2023, that concern has waned, with only 25 percent of respondents considering this a big challenge.

The survey also highlighted where the industry can do better or opportunities to enhance LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion. This year, we added a new question to the survey to understand what types of media advertisers use as part of their LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing. Only a third (34 percent) of advertisers that engage in inclusive LGBTQ+ marketing include LGBTQ+-targeted media in their campaigns. We dive more into the importance and history of LGBTQ+ later in this report.

Another takeaway from the survey was the use of pronouns in email signatures, or rather their limited use. Survey respondents indicated that 65 percent of their employers encourage pronoun use, but only 34 percent of respondents include their pronoun in their work email signatures. This is an opportunity for the advertising industry to increase its support of the LGBTQ+ community.

Overall, the value and importance of LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing increased year-over-year. 2023 saw a challenge to the successes of years past, but LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion will continue to be a priority for the advertising industry. 29 percent of respondents self-identified as LGBTQ+. This is a larger percentage than the U.S. population proportion of LGBTQ+ people, which could have led to some biases in the responses.

## About the U.S. LGBTQ+ Community

The LGBTQ+ community in the United States represents a significant and diverse segment of the population. [According to Gallup](#), as of 2023, 7.2 percent of U.S. adults identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or non-binary, a figure that has doubled since 2012. [Pew Research Center's data](#) from 2022 echoes this, indicating that about 7 percent of Americans are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, with higher percentages among younger adults. Specifically, 17 percent of adults under 30 identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, compared to smaller percentages in older age groups. This survey also revealed that 1.6 percent of U.S. adults identify as transgender or nonbinary.

These figures not only reflect the growing visibility and of LGBTQ+ individuals in society, but also underscore the diversity within this community. The generational data highlights a trend of increasing self-identification as LGBTQ+ among younger adults, suggesting a shift in social attitudes and greater openness in discussing and acknowledging diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

The LGBTQ+ community's [purchasing power is substantial](#). In 2021, LGBTQ+ spending power in the U.S. was estimated to exceed \$1.4 trillion. This figure is on par with other significant minority segments in the U.S., such as Hispanic American, African American, and AAPI.



## KEY FINDINGS

### Top 3 Benefits of LGBTQ+-Inclusive Marketing (top-two box)

- Company or brand perception becomes inclusive: 97 percent
- Increased brand loyalty: 83 percent
- Greater word of mouth: 79 percent

### Top 3 Measurement KPIs (top-two box)

- Brand perception: 90 percent
- Brand awareness: 77 percent
- Employee approval or other internal metric: 69 percent

### Top 2 Challenges to LGBTQ+-Inclusive Marketing

- Messaging appears in brand-safe environments: 39 percent
- Potential resistance or blowback from consumers: 39 percent

### Top 5 Agreed-Upon Marketing Inclusion Statements

- I think it's important for the LGBTQ+ community to be visible in advertisements: 93 percent
- I think more positively about companies that sponsor LGBTQ+ nonprofits: 86 percent
- I think more positively about companies that actively market to or include the LGBTQ+ community: 82 percent
- The advertising industry can do more to support LGBTQ+ people: 75 percent
- I am more likely to purchase from a company that actively markets to or includes the LGBTQ+ community: 68 percent

### Other Findings

- 100 percent of self-identified LGBTQ+ respondents stated they are currently avoiding at least one brand due to their lack of support for the LGBTQ+ community.
- 82 percent of respondents believe brands should increase their LGBTQ+ marketing because more support is needed.
- 97 percent of LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing occurs throughout the year, often with a spike in June. Marketing year-round to and including the LGBTQ+ community is a best practice.
- Only 34 percent of respondents indicated they use LGBTQ+-targeted media.

This is an opportunity for LGBTQ+-targeted media to take a greater share of media placements. Most LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing appeared through targetable digital media types, such as social media, websites, programmatic, and influencers.

- 78 percent of respondents felt their employer is supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. This is down from 86 percent in 2021.
- Although 65 percent of respondents reported their employer encourages the use of personal pronouns, only 34 percent of respondents are acting by putting their pronouns in their work email signature.



## BEST PRACTICES

### Cast LGBTQ+ People

It is important for the LGBTQ+ community to identify with and see themselves in your brand and your brand's marketing. Casting identifiable LGBTQ+ community members (e.g., same-sex couples, out celebrities, LGBTQ+ social settings) fosters positive brand perception about inclusivity. Additionally, casting LGBTQ+ people is important for further growth and acceptance of the community, as consumers who are exposed to LGBTQ+ people in the media are more likely to be accepting and supportive of their issues.

### Build Inclusivity with Pronouns

It is important never to assume a person's pronouns. Using the wrong pronouns can be offensive or even harmful. By using a person's pronouns correctly, you show respect, form an inclusive environment, and can reduce the adverse effects of social oppression. Encouraging the inclusion of pronouns in email signatures fosters a safe and inclusive workplace.

### Utilize LGBTQ+ media

A majority of LGBTQ+ media outlets were created out of necessity and activism and remain an integral part of their local communities today. Advertising in, and thereby supporting, LGBTQ+ media is a way to enhance brand perception. LGBTQ+ people are more likely to purchase from brands that advertise in and support LGBTQ+ media.

### Advertise 365

Embrace the LGBTQ+ community 365 days a year in marketing and advertising campaigns. While most Pride events happen in June, not every city or community celebrates then. There are many other dates and events of importance to the LGBTQ+ community.

### Embrace Diverse Perspectives

Having a marketing team of diverse perspectives and backgrounds, including ethnic and sexual orientation, is a great way to ensure your brand is speaking authentically. Incorporating diverse perspectives into your marketing can help you get the messaging right, avoid backlash, and show authentic support for the LGBTQ+ community. Look to employee resource groups or other parts of your company if you do not have enough diversity on your team. Alternatively, your brand may want to look to an LGBTQ+-owned agency, which can bring additional diverse perspectives and ensure your LGBTQ+ marketing does not miss the mark.

### Partner with LGBTQ+ Nonprofits

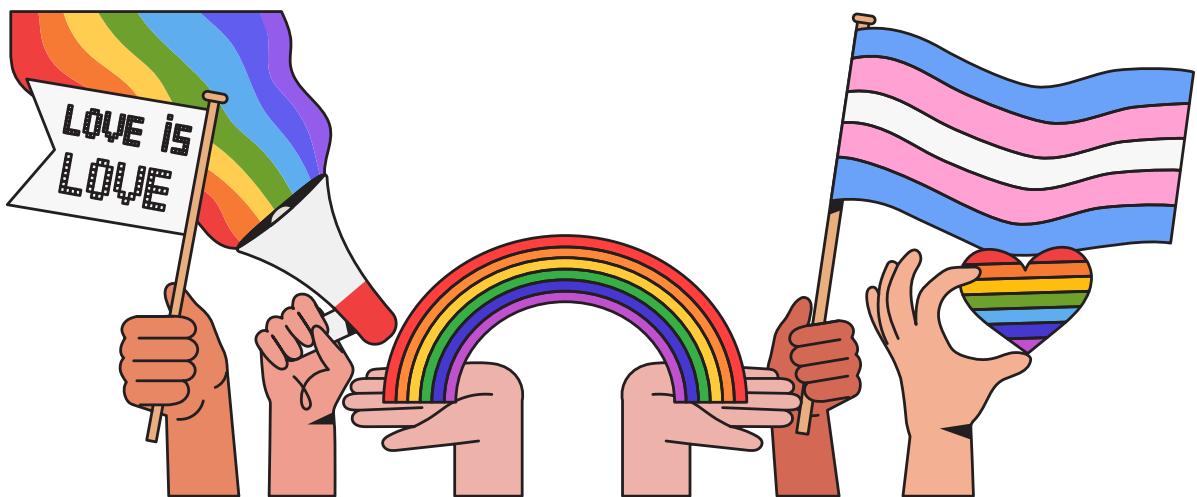
One of the most beneficial ways your brand can make a significant impact in the community is by donating to LGBTQ+-established nonprofits. This could be as simple as giving a portion of the profits that come from Pride-themed products to nonprofits.

## Avoid Rainbow-Washing

“Rainbow-washing” is when a brand claims to support the LGBTQ+ community and puts rainbow colors and/or LGBTQ+ imagery in advertising and products in hopes of increasing LGBTQ+ sales, but without a tangible effort to support the community. Brands can avoid rainbow-washing by collaborating with an LGBTQ+ nonprofit, increasing diversity and acceptance within the company, working with an LGBTQ+-specialized agency, and lifting the LGBTQ+ community. The key factor in avoiding rainbow-washing is authentic support for the LGBTQ+ community through action.

## Create Employee Resource Groups

Establishing employee resource groups can be a great way to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace. ERGs are voluntary, employee-led groups who share a characteristic, such as gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The groups exist to provide support and help in personal or career development and to create a safe space where employees can bring their whole selves to the table. ERGs can also serve as an internal resource to reduce the risk of improper messaging.



The background features a dark blue field with two large, flowing, multi-colored bands that resemble a rainbow. The top band curves from the upper left towards the right, while the bottom band curves from the lower left towards the right. Each band is composed of multiple parallel lines in the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, white, pink, light blue, and brown. The text is centered between these two bands.

# **SURVEY RESULTS**

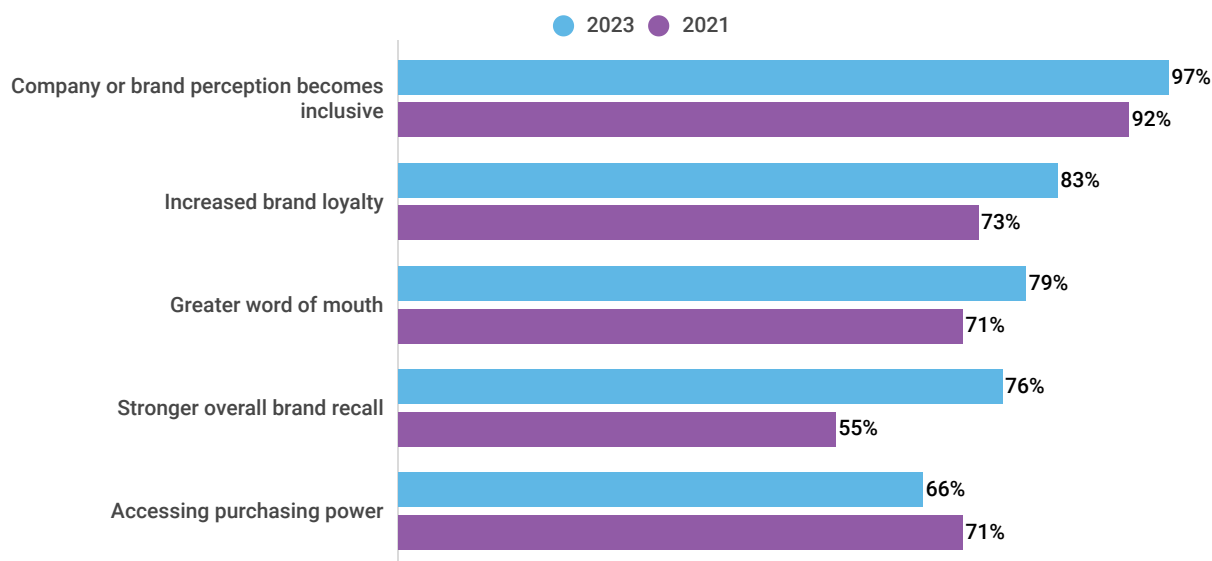
## Section 1: Embracing the LGBTQ+ Community

### Benefits of LGBTQ+-Inclusive Marketing (Top-Two Box)

A commitment to LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion delivers significant benefits to the brand that wants to be inclusive. Based on responses that indicated a 4 or 5, almost all (97 percent) respondents rated “Company or brand perception becomes inclusive” as the top benefit of LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing. This was a slight increase from 2021 (92 percent).

### Benefits (Top-Two Box)

Base: 56



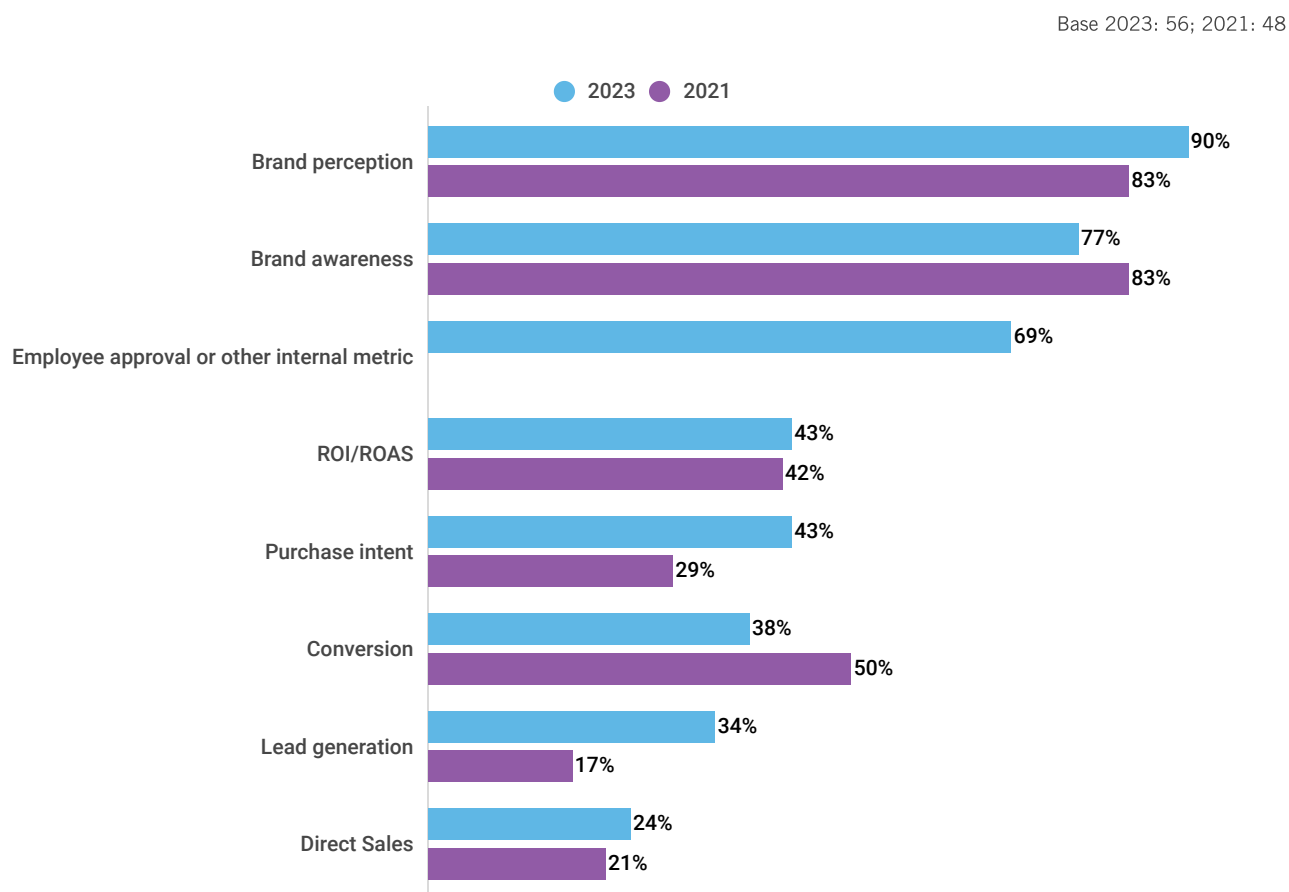
Q. Please rate the potential benefits of LGBTQ+ inclusive marketing. Rate each statement below on a scale of 1–5, where 1 = Less Important and 5 = More Important.

The 2023 results largely align with 2021, with most of the benefits ranking with greater importance than in 2021. The only benefit that slid slightly in importance was “accessing purchasing power” which dropped to 66 percent (from 71 percent in 2021).

## Important Measurement KPIs (Top-Two Box)

Brand perception continues as a top measurement KPI for LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing, with 90 percent of respondents indicating as such. Brand awareness, tied in 2021 with brand perception, dropped as a top measurement KPI to 77 percent.

### Important Measurement KPIs (Top-Two Box)



Q. What KPIs are most important to your company to measure the success of your LGBTQ+ inclusive marketing?  
Rate on a 1–5 scale where 1 = Less Important and 5 = More important.

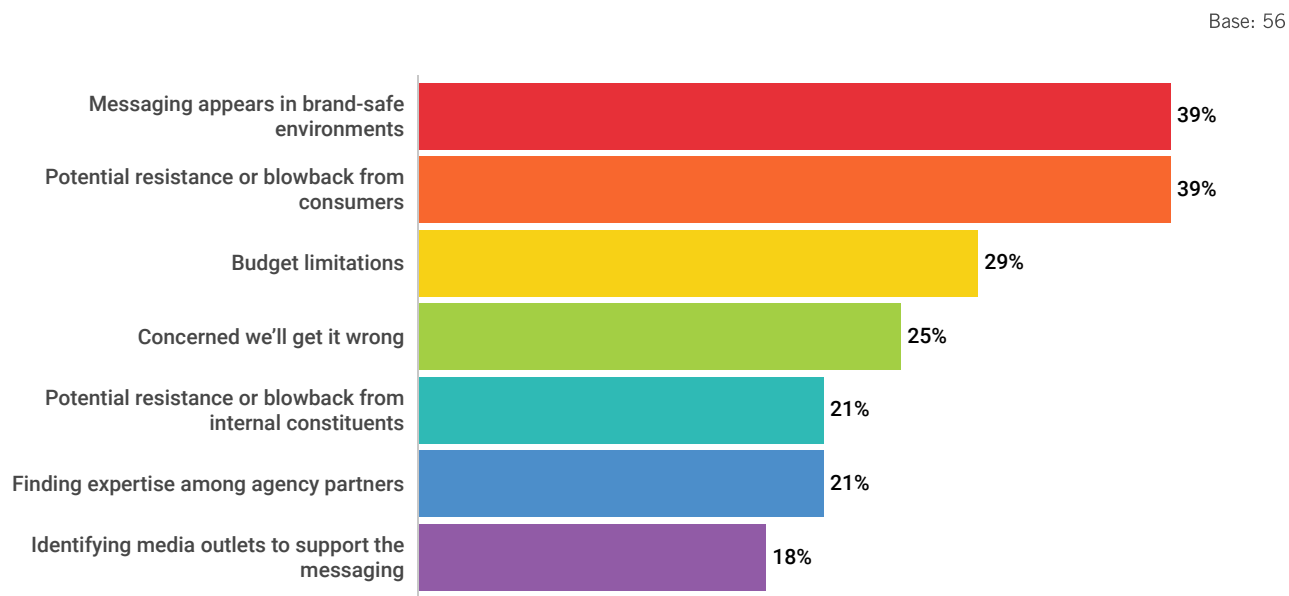
In 2023, we added “Employee approval or other internal approval metric” as an option, which resulted in 69 percent of respondents indicating it is a top measurement KPI for LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion.

ROI/ROAS and purchase intent (43 percent each) round out the top measurement KPIs.

## Challenges to LGBTQ+-Inclusive Marketing (Top-Two Box)

In 2023, the two biggest challenges to LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing are making sure the messaging appears in brand-safe environments and potential resistance or blowback from consumers (39 percent each).

### 2023 Challenges (Top-Two Box)

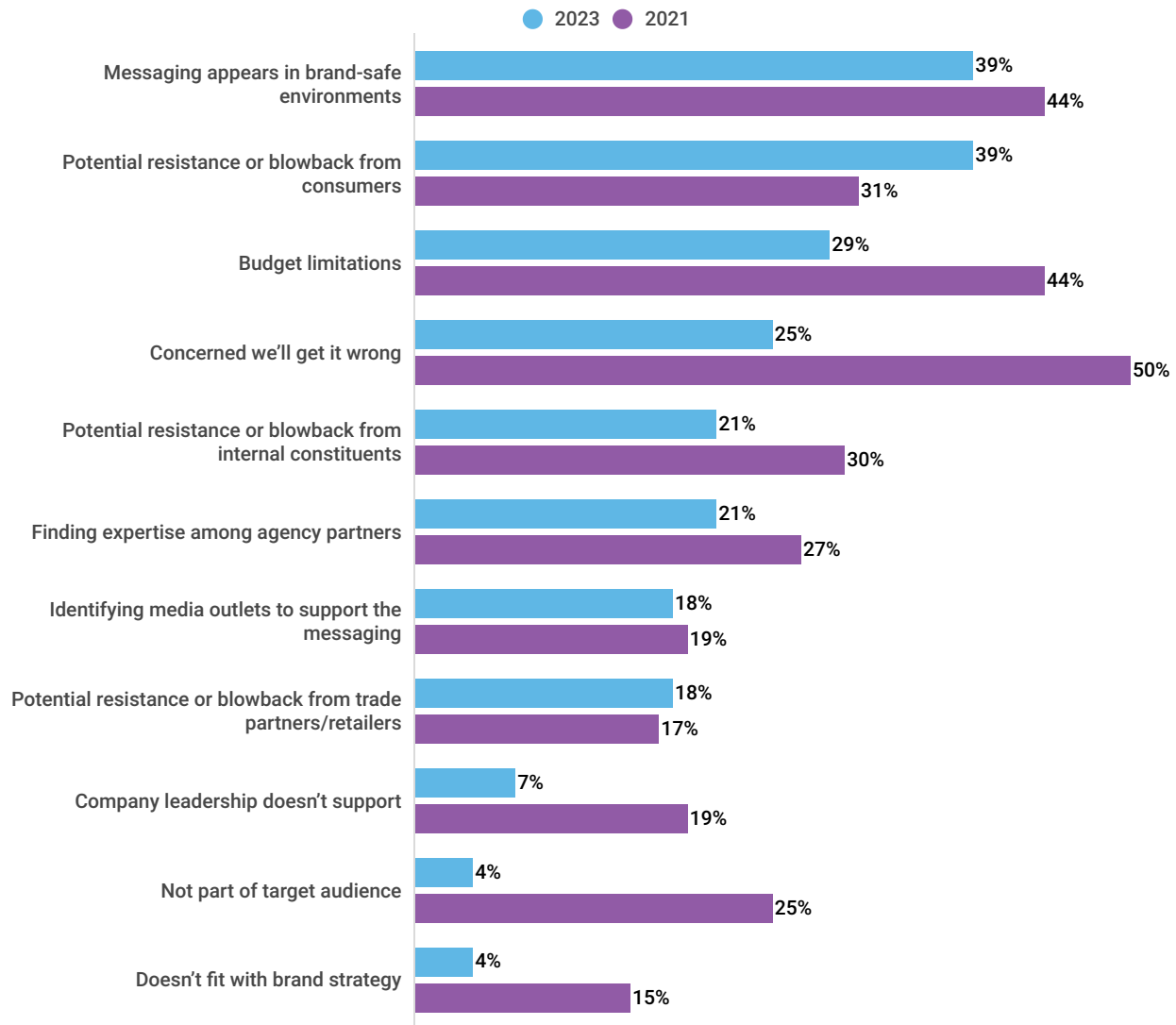


Q. In your opinion, what are the challenges of LGBTQ+ inclusive marketing?  
Rate each statement below on a scale of 1–5, where 1 = Not a Challenge and 5 = Big Challenge.

Less than a third of respondents in 2023 felt that the other challenges listed were not big challenges. This is a significant shift from 2021, when half of the respondents were concerned about getting LGBTQ+ marketing inclusion wrong.

## 2023 vs. 2021 Challenges (Top-Two Box)

Base 2023: 56; 2021: 48



While potential resistance or blowback from consumers increased slightly as a challenge from 2021, the other identified big challenges from 2021 have fallen significantly in their ranking. The top challenge from 2021, “Concerned we’ll get it wrong,” was only considered a big challenge by 25 percent of respondents in 2023 versus 50 percent in 2021.

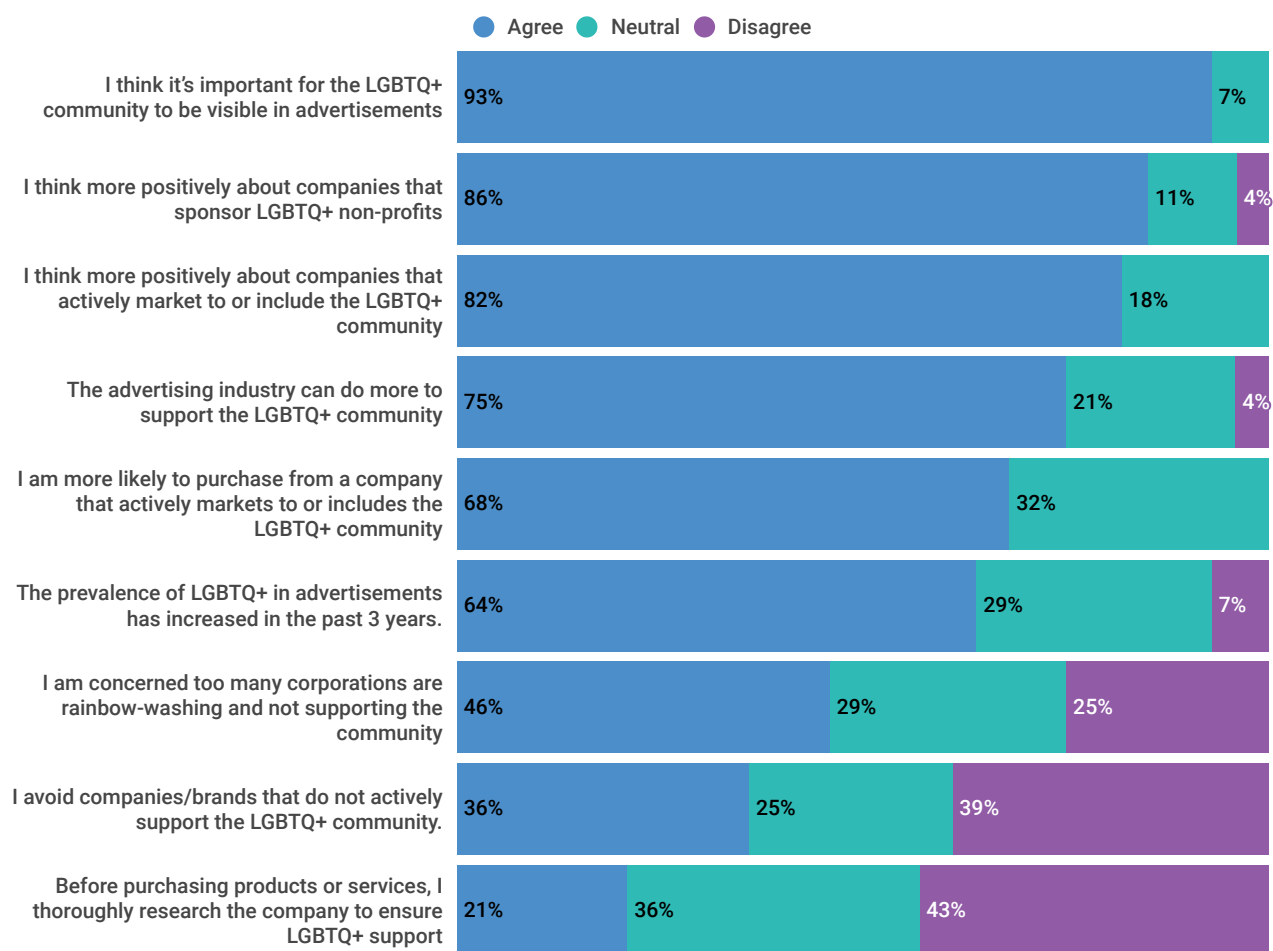


## LGBTQ+ Marketing Inclusion Opinions

93 percent of respondents think it is important for the LGBTQ+ community to be visible in advertisements. Additionally, 86 percent of respondents think more positively about a company that sponsors an LGBTQ+ nonprofit and 82 percent think more positively about a company that actively markets to or includes the LGBTQ+ community. The top three statements had significant increases in their agreement from respondents when compared to 2021.

### 2023 LGBTQ+ Marketing Opinions

Base: 56



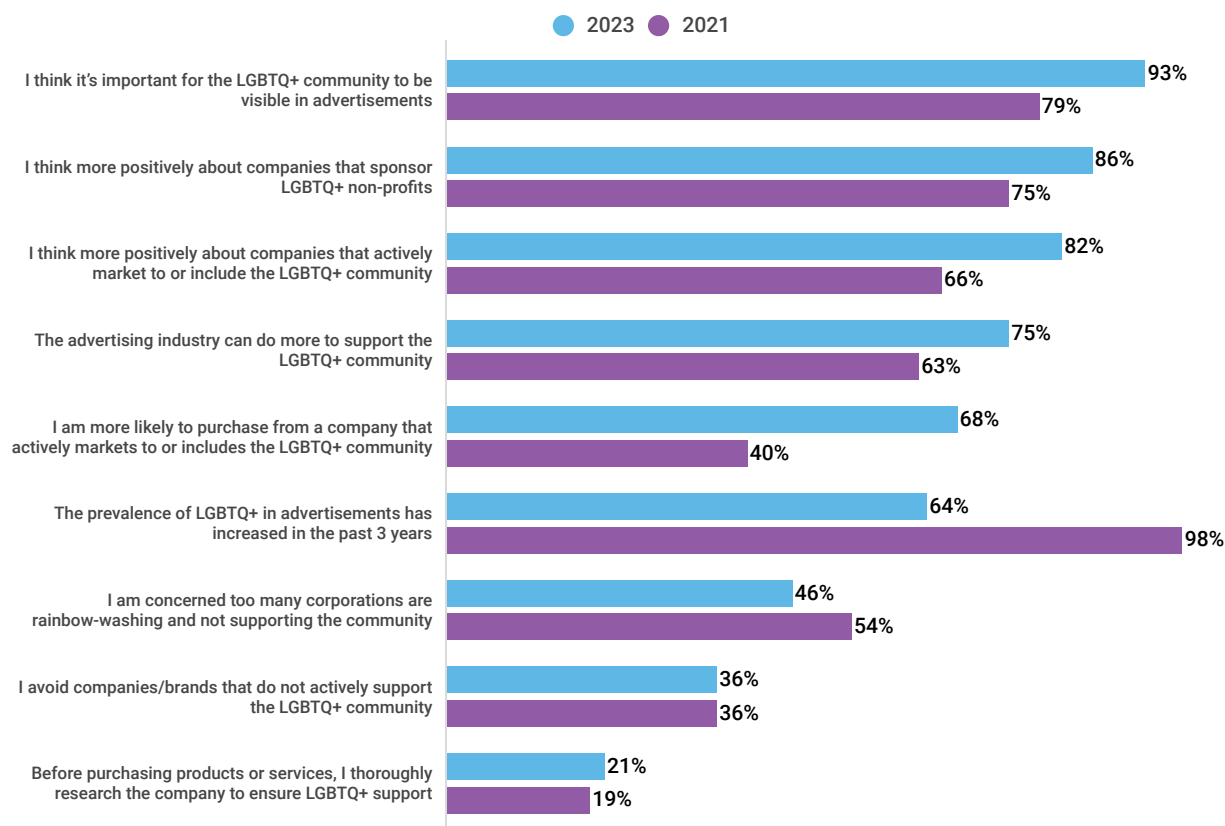
Q. Please rate whether you personally agree with, disagree with, or are neutral on the following statements.

Three-quarters of respondents felt the advertising industry could do more to support the LGBTQ+ community. In a separate question, respondents were asked to share what else they thought the industry could do to support the LGBTQ+ community. Here is a selection of their verbatims:

- “Representation as everyday people just like other under-represented communities.”
- “Educate and diversify at the same time.”
- “Look for endemic media spaces for the LGBTQ+ community.”
- “Provide data that shows it is just as good for business as it is for feeling good about it.”
- “It needs to feel natural and be ingrained in all advertising materials vs. sticking out and feeling forced and/or spotlighted.”
- “Require diverse spending reporting for prestigious awards; share playbooks for how to do it right to alleviate rainbow-washing fears from companies and from consumers.”
- “Make it easier to identify LGBTQ+-owned media agencies and publishers.”
- “Ensure representation across the industry.”
- “Hold companies accountable and call them out for rainbow-washing.”
- “Stop backing down to homophobes, racists, and others. Brands are stronger if they stick with their morals and values.”

## 2023 vs. 2021 LGBTQ+ Marketing Opinions

Base: 2023: 56; 2021: 48



When comparing responses from 2021, we see a shift in opinions, with more respondents agreeing with many of the statements. However, three statements had opinion shifts from 2021 that deserve further exploration:

- “I am more likely to purchase from a company that actively markets to or includes the LGBTQ+ community.” In 2021, only 40 percent of respondents agreed with this statement. However, in 2023, 68 percent of respondents agreed, which aligns with similar statements and their level of agreement.

- “The prevalence of LGBTQ+ people in advertisements has increased in the past three years.” This is one of only two statements that decreased in agreement from 2021 to 2023. In 2021, 98 percent of respondents felt LGBTQ+ inclusion increased. In 2023, that feeling drops to just 64 percent.
- “I am concerned too many corporations are rainbow-washing and not supporting the community.” This statement experienced a slight decrease in agreement from respondents, dropping from 54 percent in 2021 to 46 percent in 2023.

## What Is Rainbow-Washing?

While visibility of Pride flags and LGBTQ+ imagery in marketing can empower the LGBTQ+ community, using those symbols without true support for the community can leave consumers feeling exploited and brands perceived as disingenuous in their allyship. This is “rainbow-washing,” the act of misleading queer consumers and allies with only surface-level LGBTQ+ community support without taking any actions to defend LGBTQ+ people’s identities or rights.

For example, a brand that makes public displays of support during Pride Month but endorses U.S. legislators with anti-LGBTQ+ agendas may be considered to be “rainbow-washing.” The same is true of brands that attempt to endorse the LGBTQ+ community through their marketing or corporate actions, but then withdraw their support due to public anti-LGBTQ+ concerns.

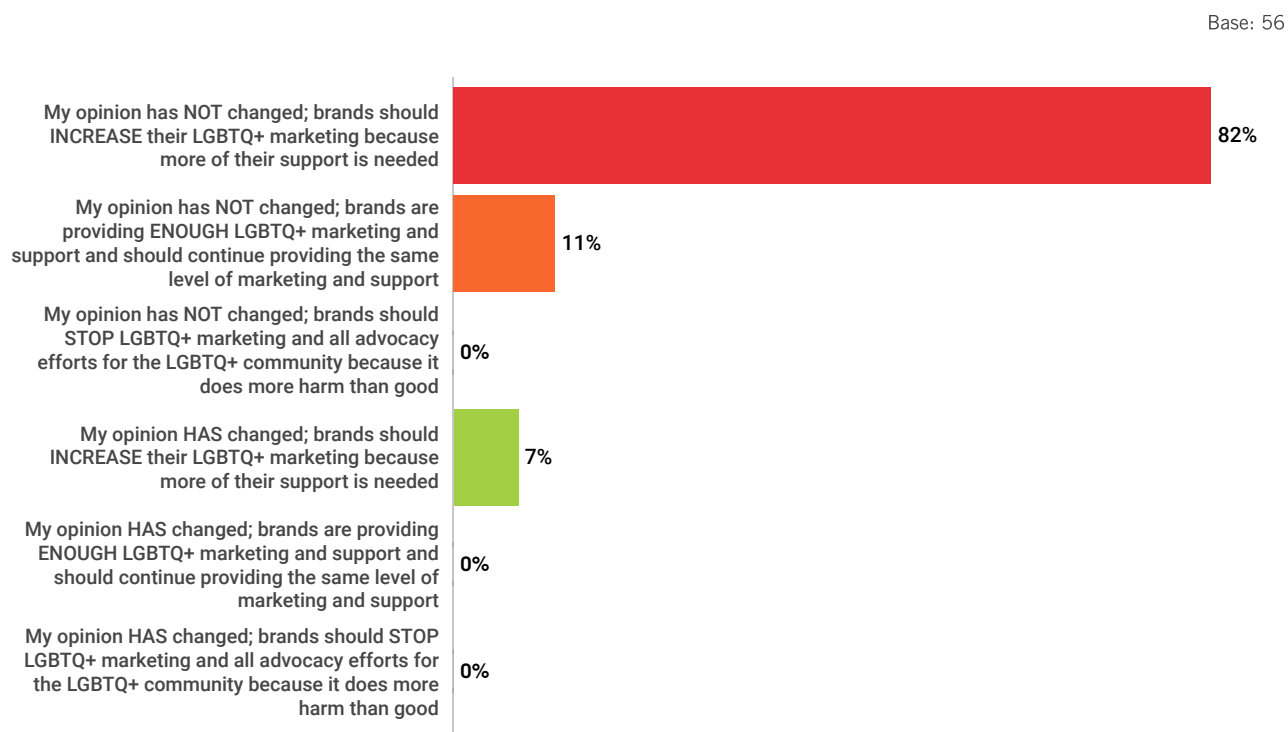
Nike is an excellent example of a brand that avoids rainbow-washing by coupling its Pride collection of apparel with generous donations to LGBTQ+ grant recipients. Others like TEVA and LEGO have released LGBTQ+-themed products that act as an extension of their support of relevant nonprofits and internal initiatives that allow LGBTQ+ employees to feel supported by their organization. These brands have come to recognize the value of the LGBTQ+ audience, made concerted efforts to reach them with targeted marketing and product lines, and then combined marketing with activism to create an authentic brand story that elevates their marketplace perception with the LGBTQ+ community.



## Advertiser Support for LGBTQ+ People

In 2023, we introduced a new question to gauge how respondent opinions may have changed in response to events negatively affecting the LGBTQ+ community in the U.S. during the previous 12 to 18 months.

### Advertiser Support for LGBTQ+ People



Q. The LGBTQ+ community and its allies have experienced notable challenges in the past year, from recent Supreme Court rulings to societal pushback on LGBTQ+-focused brand campaigns. How, if at all, have the events of the last 12–18 months changed your opinion of brand marketing and brand support for the LGBTQ+ community?

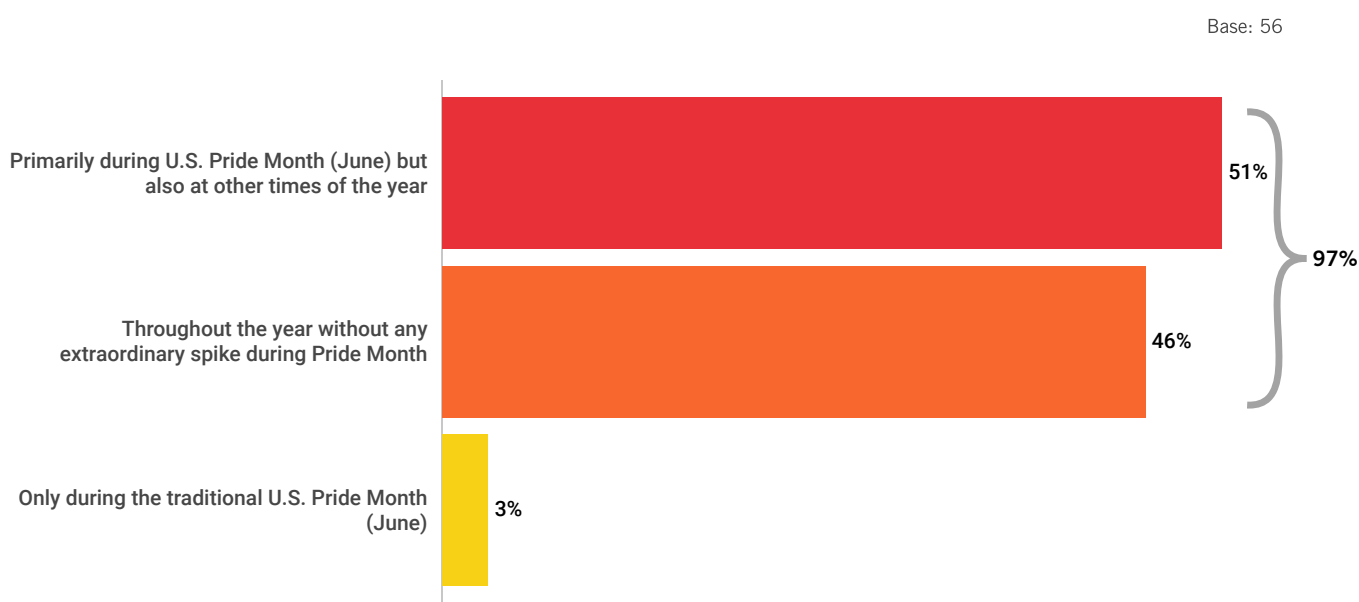
Not a single respondent felt brands and advertisers should do less LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing. Eighty-nine percent of respondents felt brands should increase their LGBTQ+ marketing. The remaining 11 percent of respondents felt brands should continue their current level of support.

## Section 2: Elements of LGBTQ+ Campaigns

### When LGBTQ+-Inclusive Marketing Takes Place

Almost all (97 percent) respondents who actively market to the LGBTQ+ community are scheduling marketing support year-round. This percent is consistent with 2021 (96 percent) and reinforces the best practice.

### Timing of LGBTQ+ Targeted Marketing



Q. How does your company/brand(s) schedule its marketing support to the LGBTQ+ community?

Slightly less than half (46 percent) of respondents who actively market to the LGBTQ+ community schedule marketing support throughout the year without any extraordinary spike during Pride Month, with 51 percent running campaigns year-round but with a focus on June (Pride Month).



## MORE THAN JUST PRIDE

June is widely recognized as LGBTQ+ month and celebrates the historical moment of the Stonewall Riots. While many communities in the U.S. have adopted June as Pride Month, many others celebrate at different times of the year, often tied to a historical LGBTQ+ moment. The following is a starter list of LGBTQ+ celebrations and events that advertisers may consider when diversifying their marketing inclusion.

### Annual Pride-Related Events and Celebrations Outside of June

#### **Austin Drag Fest**

**April**

Founded in 2015, the Austin International Drag Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that hosts an annual drag festival that showcases performers from across the globe and brings them to the heart of Austin, Texas.

#### **Hotter Than July**

**July**

Started in 1996 to celebrate Detroit's Black LGBTQ+ community. It holds the title as the world's second oldest Black LGBTQ+ Pride, with over 9,000 in attendance. Hosted by LGBT Detroit, this weeklong of events partners with community leaders and supporters by offering various safe spaces for educating and showcasing the culture.

#### **Chicago Market Days**

**August**

Market Days take place in mid-August from Belmont to Addison on North Halsted Street, an area recognized as the U.S.'s first gay village. Its daily attendance can reach 100,000 people over two days, and features more than 250 vendors, live music on five stages, and drag performances.

#### **Charlotte Pride**

**August**

Since its founding in North Carolina in 2000, Charlotte Pride has expanded its year-round programming and partnerships to connect community members with its mission, vision, and values. Charlotte Pride is now one of the largest LGBTQ+ Pride organizations in the U.S. Southeast.

#### **Black Gay Pride**

**August to September**

Atlanta Black Pride started in 1996 and is one of two officially recognized festivals for the African American LGBTQ+ community. It is held in Atlanta each year at the end of August and the beginning of September (the week of Labor Day).

## Atlanta Pride

October

The Atlanta Pride Festival is always held the weekend prior to National Coming Out Day in October. The Festival is the Atlanta Pride Committee's signature event and is the largest Pride event in the southeastern U.S., with over 300,000 individual attendees over the weekend.

## Las Vegas Pride Parade

October

Since 1983, Las Vegas has celebrated Pride through a series of events, including festivals and parades. The Las Vegas Pride Night Parade & Festival is the largest annual LGBTQ+ event in Las Vegas.

## Castro Street Fair

October

The Castro neighborhood of San Francisco has long served as the heart and soul of San Francisco's LGBTQ+ community. Started in 1974 by the first openly gay elected official in the U.S., Harvey Milk, the Castro Street Fair is a vibrant outdoor affair with performances, dance parties, arts and crafts vendors, and scavenger hunts. Proceeds of the fair are donated to local charitable organizations.

## Greater Palm Springs Pride

November

The annual Greater Palm Springs Pride in California celebrates strength, equality, and self-determination of the LGBTQ+ community and features a parade, festival, and vendor marketplace.

## 2024 Designated Months, Weeks, and Days Important to the LGBTQ+ Community

### **Aromantic Spectrum Awareness Week**

18–24 February

### **National LGBT Health Awareness Week**

18–22 March

### **International Transgender Day of Visibility**

31 March

### **Nonbinary Parents Day**

18 April

### **Lesbian Visibility Day**

26 April

### **International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia**

17 May

### **Pansexual and Panromantic Awareness Day**

24 May

### **LGBTQ+ Families Day**

1 June

### **Bisexual Health Awareness Month**

March

### **Two–Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ+ Celebration and Awareness Day**

21 March

### **International Asexuality Day**

6 April

### **Day of Silence**

April 19

Day varies from year to year. The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's Day of Silence is an organizing tool to end the silencing effect of anti-LGBTQ+ bias.

### **International Family Equality Day**

5 May

Celebrates the diversity of LGBTQ+ families worldwide.

### **Agender Pride Day**

19 May

### **LGBTQ+ Pride Month**

June

### **Stonewall Day**

28 June

Commemorates the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a pivotal event in LGBTQ+ rights history.

**Queer Youth of Faith Day****30 June****International Non-Binary People's Day****14 July****Gay Uncles Day****14 August**

Celebrates the role of gay uncles (“guncles”) in family life.

**Bisexuality Day****23 September****National Coming Out Day****11 October**

Annual LGBTQ+ awareness day to support anyone “coming out of the closet.”

**National LGBT Center Awareness Day****19 October****International Pronouns Day****Third Wednesday in October**

Annual event that seeks to make sharing, respecting, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace.

**Trans Parent Day****3 November****Transgender Day of Remembrance****20 November**

Day to memorialize those who have been murdered because of transphobia.

**Non-Binary Awareness Week**

Week surrounding 14 July,  
Sunday to Saturday

**International Drag Day****16 July**

Honors drag artists and their contribution to LGBTQ+ culture.

**Bisexual Awareness Week****16–23 September****International Lesbian Day****8 October****Spirit Day****15 October**

Supports LGBTQ+ youth and speaks out against bullying.

**Intersex Awareness Day****26 October**

Celebrated in October to commemorate the first intersex protest, which took place in Boston.

**Asexual Awareness Week****Last full week in October****Transgender Awareness Week****13–19 November****World AIDS Day****1 December****Pansexual/Panromantic Pride Day****8 December**

## LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Advertising

All the respondents who indicated they practice LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing told us that over the past year their company's creative intentionally included LGBTQ+ casting (e.g., openly trans or gender non-conforming people, same-gender couples, queer celebrities).

We asked respondents to provide some context as to how their creative featured identifiable LGBTQ+ casting. A selection of their responses:

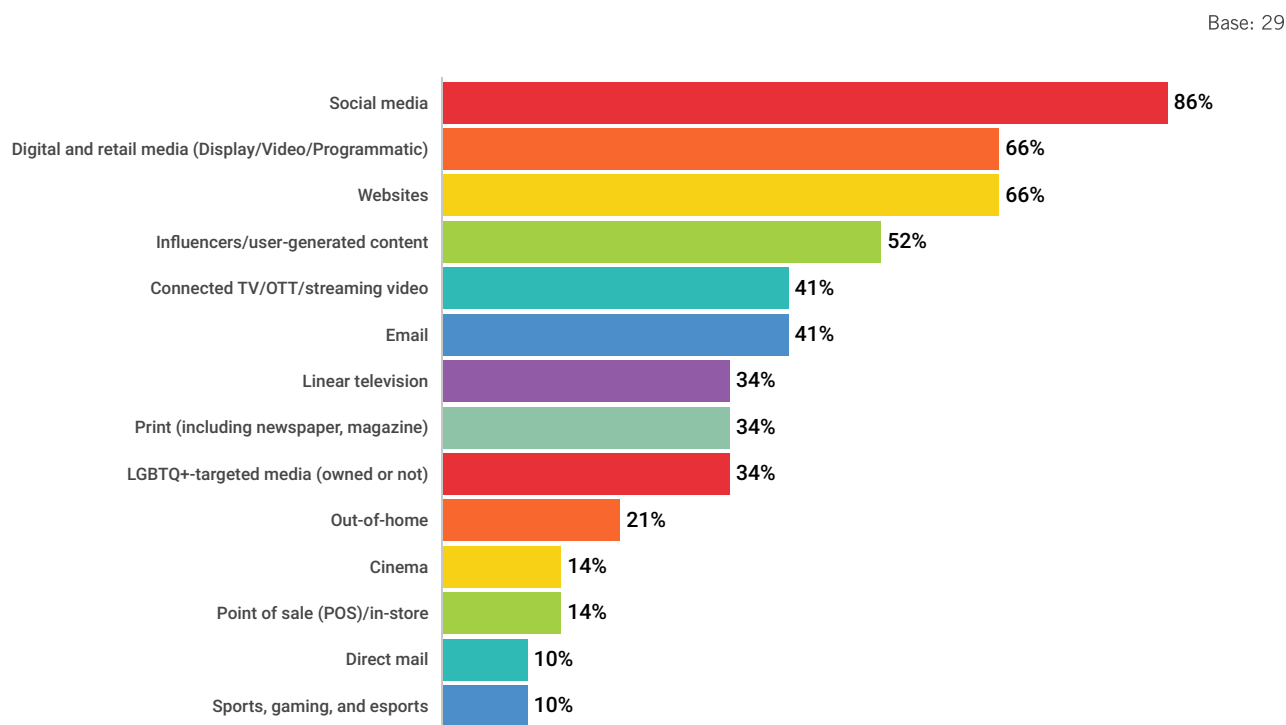
- “We have a trans brand ambassador who creates content for us in both paid and organic social media. And we constantly use identifiable LGBTQ+ influencers for content creation. We have partnered with media properties (e.g., Revry TV, *RuPaul's Drag Race*) for paid media programs.”
- “We are inclusive in our media representation in almost all programming.”
- “Mainly, casting and hiring LGBTQ+ actors and directors when applicable.”
- “Situational and recognizable celebrity talent.”
- “We created two videos with our in-house video team and cast employees who self-identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community. We've also purchased and used several stock photos that clearly depict same-gender couples.”
- “When we cast for still and video, we look for a range of people — ages, race, gender, sexuality. And we are careful not to have anyone do anything that they felt was not authentic (e.g., we would not ask a gay female model to pose as if she's in a couple with male; we listen for input from cast members).”
- “Several members of the LGBTQ+ community have been cast in ads as well as influencers from that community. However, the challenge is that often this requires the use of stereotypical props or mannerisms to get the message across.”
- “We've done TV/streaming featuring LGBTQ+ couples as part of our overall brand advertising campaigns, and throughout the year we market a particular service focused on the LGBTQ+ community. That work features digital video and social media with LGBTQ+ people featured.”
- “We used gay and lesbian couples in our creative.”



## Placement of LGBTQ+-Inclusive Marketing

A new question introduced in 2023 focused on where brands featured creative that included LGBTQ+ casting. Most of this work is found on the internet and in more targetable media (social media, websites, digital and retail media, influencers, email).

### Where LGBTQ+ Inclusive Marketing Occurs



Q. Where did your creative featuring LGBTQ+ casting appear?

The heavy use of internet media aligns with mass-market campaigns and the current state of usage in the industry. However, there is less use of LGBTQ+ casting in creative that is more likely to be seen by a more general audience.

Print and linear television were only used by a third of respondents for their creative featuring LGBTQ+ casting. Other general audience media, such as out-of-home, point of sale/in-store, cinema, and sports/gaming/esports, show less usage.

The results of this question generally align with usage of media types for general market campaigns, including heavy use of digital media types.

Interestingly, only a third of respondents that feature LGBTQ+ casting in their creative do so in LGBTQ+-targeted media (LGBTQ+-owned or not). This represents a significant opportunity for advertisers to reach more of the LGBTQ+ community. According to [recent research from ANA AIMM](#) (Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing), targeted LGBTQ+ campaigns can generate almost twice as much purchase intent among LGBTQ+ consumers than mass-market campaigns.

In the past, LGBTQ+ media may have been a challenge for advertisers, as they need to ensure their messaging is appearing in brand-safe environments. However, LGBTQ+ media has matured in many ways. LGBTQ+-owned media, especially newspapers, play a special role within the community and can be an excellent way to reach the LGBTQ+ community. In the next section, we dive more into LGBTQ+-owned media.



## HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF LGBTQ+ MEDIA

The historical importance and role of LGBTQ+ media can be traced back to the mid-20th century. Over the years, LGBTQ+ media has played a crucial role in shaping public perception, fostering community, and advocating for social change.

The earliest instances of LGBTQ+ media can be found in publications like *ONE Magazine*, which emerged in 1953 as the first openly gay magazine in the United States, and *The Ladder*, the first openly lesbian magazine, which launched in 1956. These publications served as a lifeline for a community often marginalized and oppressed, providing a platform for self-expression and connection. At a time when homosexuality was widely stigmatized and criminalized, these media outlets offered a space for individuals to share their experiences and find a sense of belonging.

The Stonewall Riots in 1969 marked a pivotal moment in the LGBTQ+ rights movement, and it also had a profound impact on LGBTQ+ media. The ensuing years saw an increase in the number of publications, both in print and later online, dedicated to LGBTQ+ issues. These media outlets became instrumental in spreading information about LGBTQ+ rights, HIV/AIDS awareness, and other pressing issues affecting the community.

As the LGBTQ+ rights movement progressed, so did the visibility of LGBTQ+ characters in mainstream media. Television shows like *Ellen* and *Will & Grace* in the late 20th century helped challenge stereotypes and normalize LGBTQ+ identities. However, it was not until the 21st century that LGBTQ+ representation in media truly began to diversify and reflect the complexity of the community. Shows like *Queer as Folk*, *The L Word*, and *Pose* not only entertained but also served as tools for education and empathy.

In addition to entertainment and activism, LGBTQ+ media has played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing legal decisions. LGBTQ+ media continues to be essential in the fight for equality, which is ongoing despite the progress made. It provides a counter-narrative to harmful stereotypes, challenges discrimination, and celebrates the rich diversity within the LGBTQ+ community.

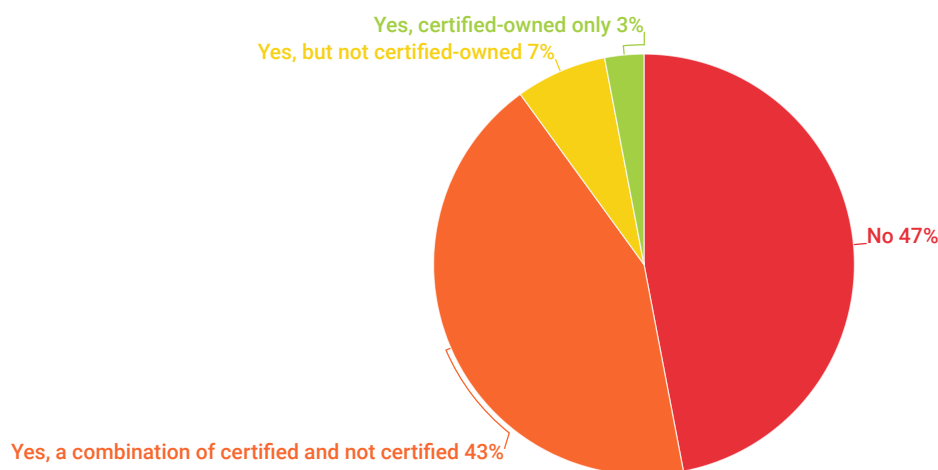
## Section 3: Use of LGBTQ+-Owned Media and Agencies

### Use of LGBTQ+-Owned Media

In 2023, we asked respondents who run LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing if they use LGBTQ+-owned media. In the previous section, it was identified that only a third of respondents typically use any LGBTQ+-targeted media (owned or not).

### LGBTQ+-Owned Media Use

Base: 40



#### Q. Do you use LGBTQ+-owned media in your marketing?

53 percent of respondents indicated they use LGBTQ+-owned media, regardless of certification. It is important to note that not all LGBTQ+ media is LGBTQ+-owned — an example of this is Logo TV, which is owned by Paramount. One of the barriers to using LGBTQ+-owned media that is generally cited by advertisers is difficulty in identifying the outlets. The ANA maintains a [list of certified](#) LGBTQ+-owned marketing and advertising businesses, including media.

In addition to these resources, the following is a starter list of LGBTQ+ media that advertisers may want to include in their media planning and buying. The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce is the key certification body for LGBTQ+-owned businesses.

## LGBTQ+-Owned U.S. Media from [ANA Certified Supplier Diversity List](#)

- [Bleulife Media Group](#) (Black, LGBTQ+)
- [Gay Desert Guide](#) (LGBTQ+)
- [Passport Magazine](#) (LGBTQ+)
- [Q.Digital](#) (LGBTQ+)
- [Revry](#) (Black, LGBTQ+, Women)
- [Saldivar Consulting Inc., dba Cultivated Reach](#) (Hispanic, LGBTQ+, Small Business)
- [Towleroad](#) (LGBTQ+)

## LGBTQ+ U.S. Media (ownership has not been verified)

### Periodicals:

- [The Advocate](#)
- [Compete Magazine](#)
- [EDGE Media Network](#)
- [The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide](#)
- [Lesbian News](#)
- [LGBTQ Nation](#)
- [Out Front Magazine](#)
- [Outsports](#)

### Radio Stations:

- [Channel Q](#)
- [KGAY \(AM\)](#)
- [Pride Radio](#)

### Streaming Services:

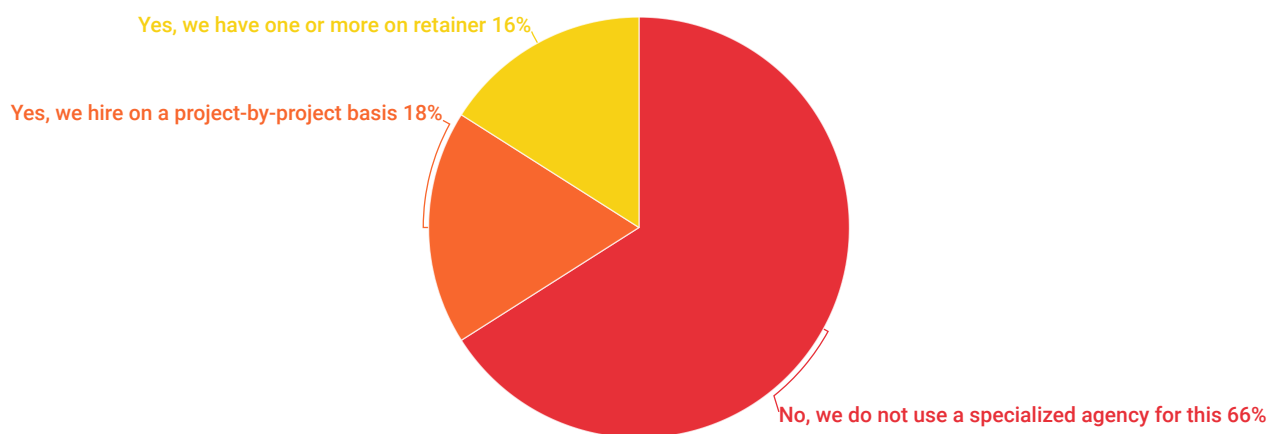
- [Dekkoo](#)
- [Here TV](#)
- [OutTV](#)
- [SVTV Network](#)
- [Unicorns.Live](#)
- [WOW Presents Plus](#)

## Use of Specialized LGBTQ+ Agencies

In 2023, 34 percent of respondents use a specialized LGBTQ+ agency for their LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing. This is similar to 2021, in which only 36 percent of respondents indicated as such.

### Specialized Agency Use

Base: 38



Q. Do you work with an agency that specifically helps market to the LGBTQ+ community?

A majority (66 percent) of respondents do not use a specialized agency for their LGBTQ+ marketing. Only 16 percent of respondents have an LGBTQ+ specialized agency on retainer, with the remaining 18 percent hiring on a project-by-project basis.

Out of those respondents that use an LGBTQ+ specialized agency (10), only half indicated that their LGBTQ+-specialized agency also advised their brand/company or otherwise did general marketing campaign work for additional audiences. Due to the small number of respondents that use an LGBTQ+ specialized agency, this result should only be considered directional.

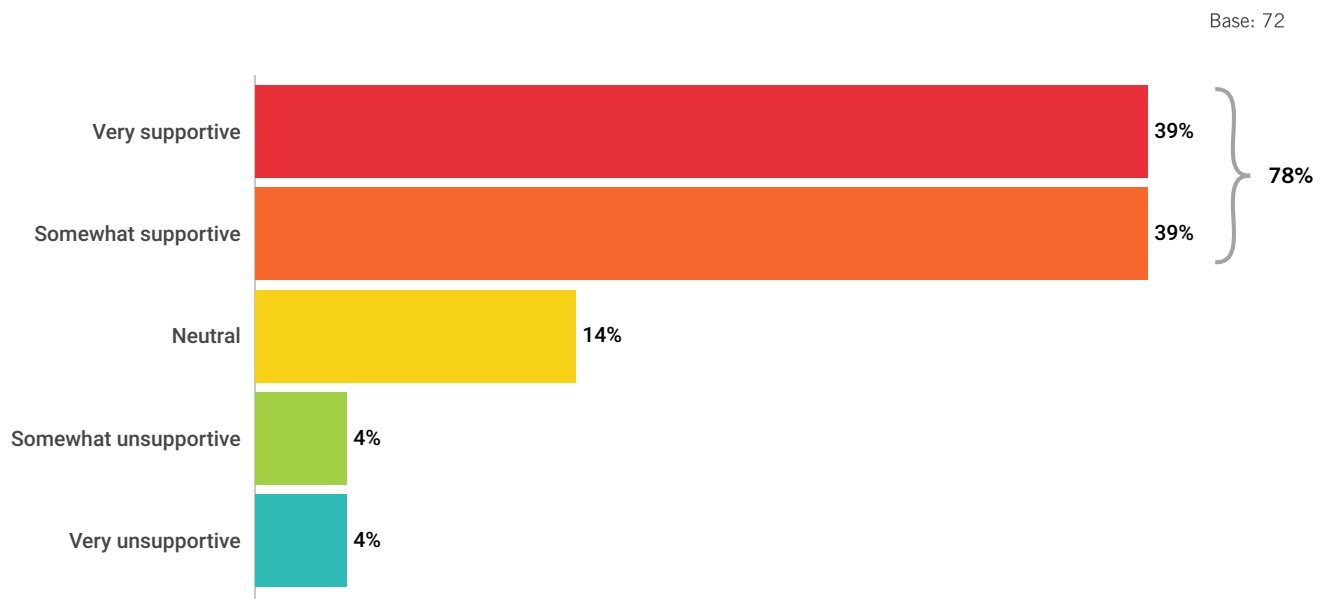
Of those who do work with an LGBTQ+-specialized agency, we asked if their agency was also certified LGBTQ+-owned. 44 percent of respondents indicated they were.

## Section 4: Support for LGBTQ+ Community and Staff

### Support for the LGBTQ+ Community Among Advertisers

In 2021, 86 percent of respondents believed their employers to be supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. However, in 2023 that percentage dropped to 78 percent of respondents.

#### Supportive Employers



Q. How LGBTQ+-supportive do you believe your employer is?

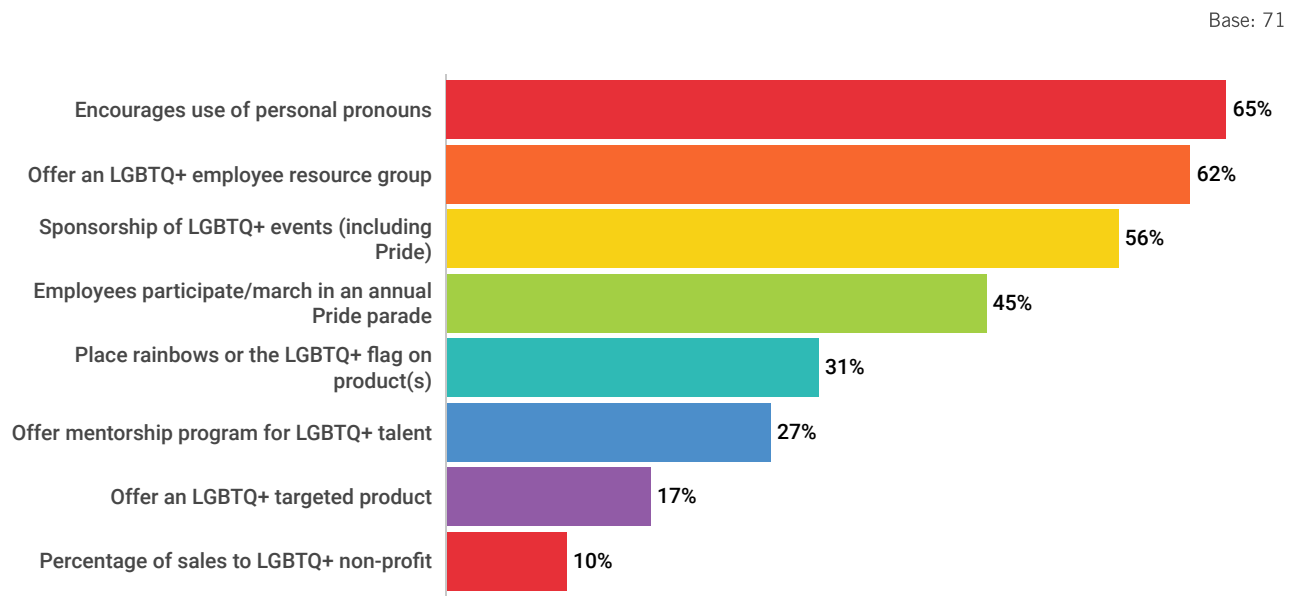
Conversely, there was a small uptick in the percentage of advertisers that are perceived as unsupportive (6 percent in 2021; 8 percent in 2023).

In 2023, we added the question, “Do you believe your company also supports causes or politicians that are detrimental to the LGBTQ+ community?” Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated yes. When we compare the responses to this question with how supportive one believes their employer is, that a third of respondents believe their employer is LGBTQ+ supportive but is also supporting causes or politicians that are detrimental to the LGBTQ+ community.

## How Advertisers Support LGBTQ+ Staff

When asked if their company offers any LGBTQ+ support for employees, 75 percent of respondents reported they do.

### Employer LGBTQ+ Community Support



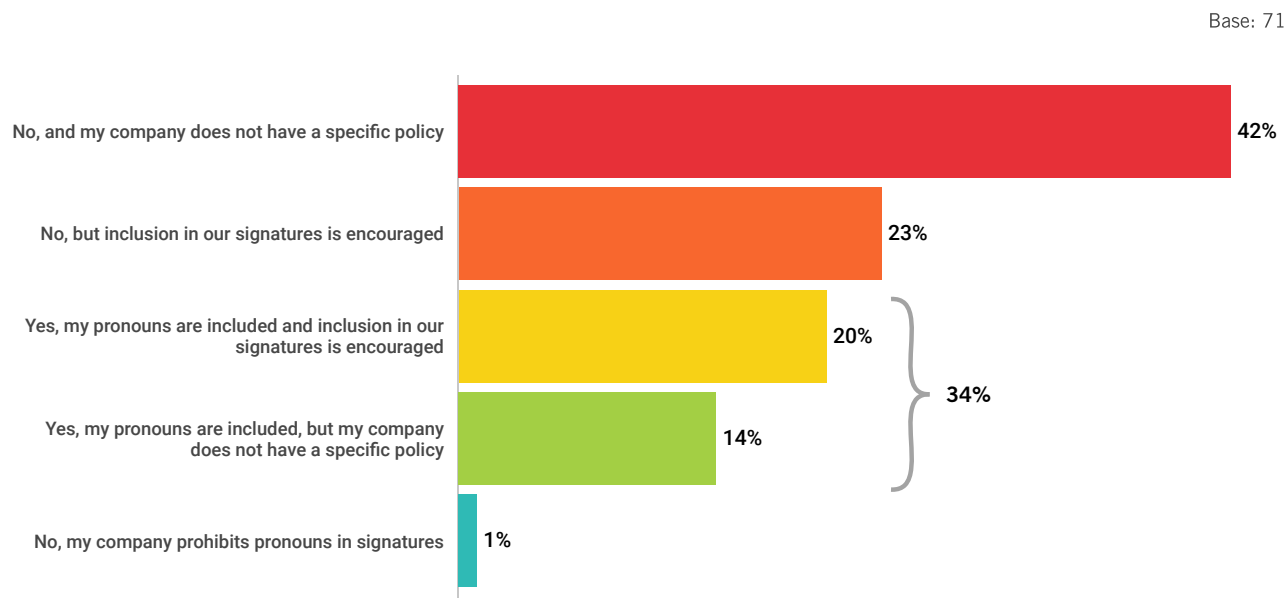
Q. Does your company offer LGBTQ+ community or employee support? (Select all that apply.)

A majority of respondents reported their employer supports the LGBTQ+ community through the encouraged use of pronouns (65 percent), offer an LGBTQ+ employee resource group (62 percent), and sponsor LGBTQ+ events (56 percent).

## Building Inclusivity with Pronouns

In the previous question, we learned that 65 percent of respondent employers support their LGBTQ+ employees by encouraging the use of personal pronouns. However, only a third of respondents reported including pronouns in their email signatures.

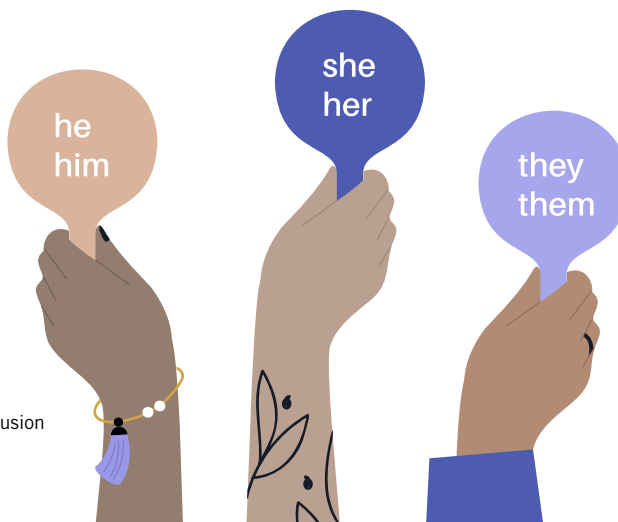
### Pronoun Inclusion in Email Signatures



Q. Do you include your pronouns in your work email signature? Is pronoun inclusion encouraged by your employer?

While most respondents (66 percent) do not include their pronouns in their signatures, 43 percent work for a company that encourages pronoun use.

Given the gap between the percentage of employers that encourage pronoun use in email signatures (65 percent) and the percentage of respondents that use pronouns in their signatures (34 percent), there is an opportunity for individuals to start including pronouns in their email signatures. Including pronouns in email signatures and encouraging their use is a first step toward respecting people's identity and creating a more welcoming space for people of all genders.

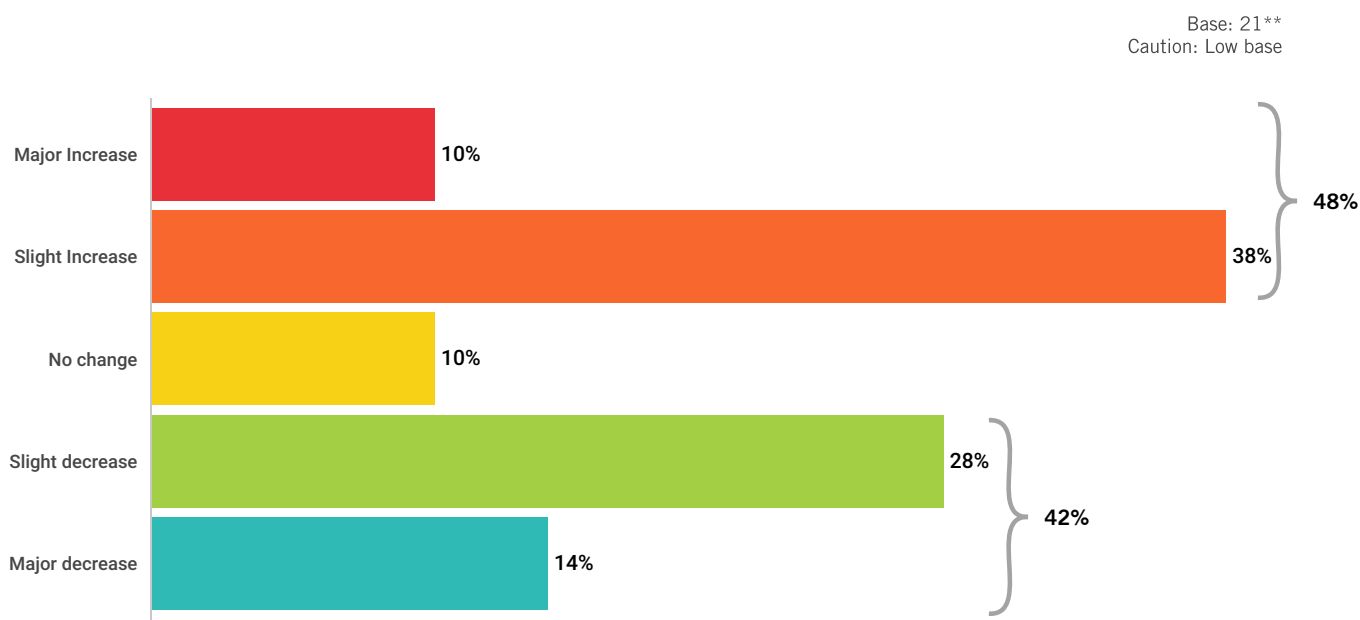


## Section 5: LGBTQ+ Community Responses

In the survey, respondents were given the option to self-identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. 29 percent of respondents indicated they were members of the community and were presented with an additional set of questions.

The first question in this set asked how respondents felt regarding the level of support from brands for the LGBTQ+ community. 48 percent of respondents felt there was some increase in support from brands in the past year. There is a divergence of opinion among LGBTQ+ respondents, with 42 percent indicating a decrease in support from advertisers.

### 2023 LGBTQ+ Support from Advertisers



Q. For 2023 compared to previous years, what are your overall feelings regarding the support from brands for the LGBTQ+ community?

Additionally, we asked LGBTQ+ community members if they were personally boycotting a brand or company due to their lack of support of the LGBTQ+ community. Every single respondent — 100 percent — indicated they were boycotting at least one brand or company due to their lack of support.



## CONCLUSIONS

The survey results reaffirm the critical importance of LGBTQ+ inclusivity in marketing, with 97 percent of respondents acknowledging that LGBTQ+ marketing enhances their brand's perception of being inclusive.

Despite the strides in creative featuring LGBTQ+ casting, the industry faces the challenge of extending this inclusivity to more traditional and general audience media platforms. The current trends highlight a missed opportunity for broader representation and education in these areas. Additionally, brands that can authentically weave LGBTQ+ inclusivity into their campaigns throughout the year, and not just during Pride events, are more likely to resonate with the LGBTQ+ community.

However, the commitment to inclusivity must transcend marketing campaigns. It necessitates a holistic approach, encompassing pronounced support for LGBTQ+ rights, thoughtful media selection, and fostering an inclusive corporate culture. For instance, the pronounced use of personal pronouns and the support of LGBTQ+ employee resource groups are steps toward creating a nurturing workplace. Yet, the survey also reveals a concerning trend of perceived support erosion, highlighting the need for sustained and genuine efforts in supporting the LGBTQ+ community.

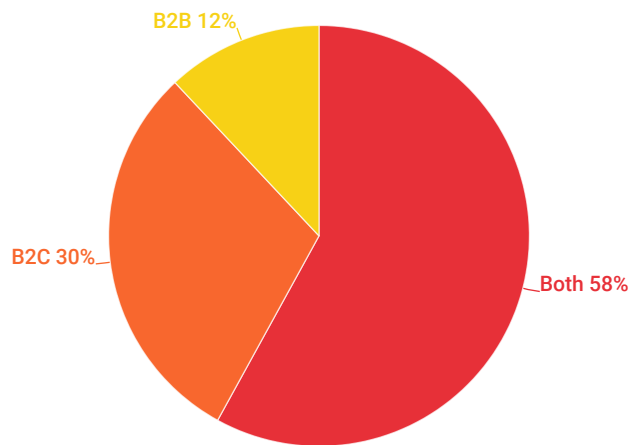
In conclusion, while the advertising industry has made progress in LGBTQ+ inclusivity, the journey is far from complete. The path forward involves a genuine commitment to understanding and representing the LGBTQ+ community as an integral part of brand ethos and operation. By championing diversity, fostering inclusivity, and maintaining a steadfast commitment to authentic representation, brands can better resonate with the LGBTQ+ community.

## Respondent Demographics

Total number of ANA advertisers/client-side members surveyed: 101

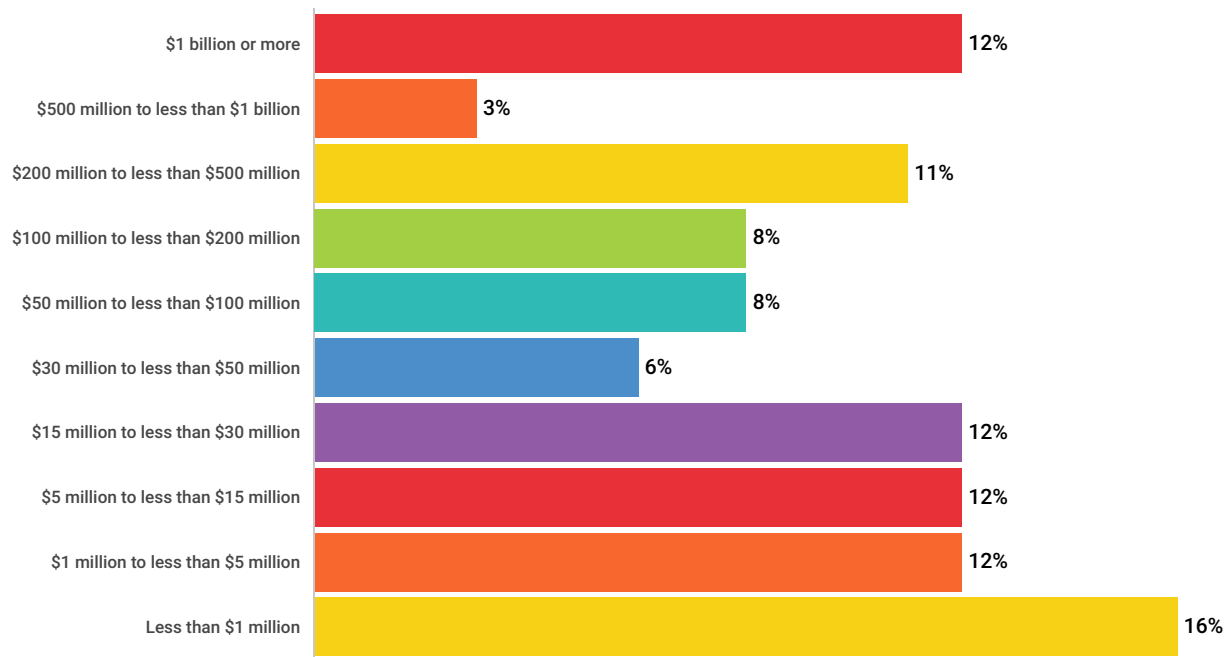
### Is your primary business B2B or B2C?

Base: 40



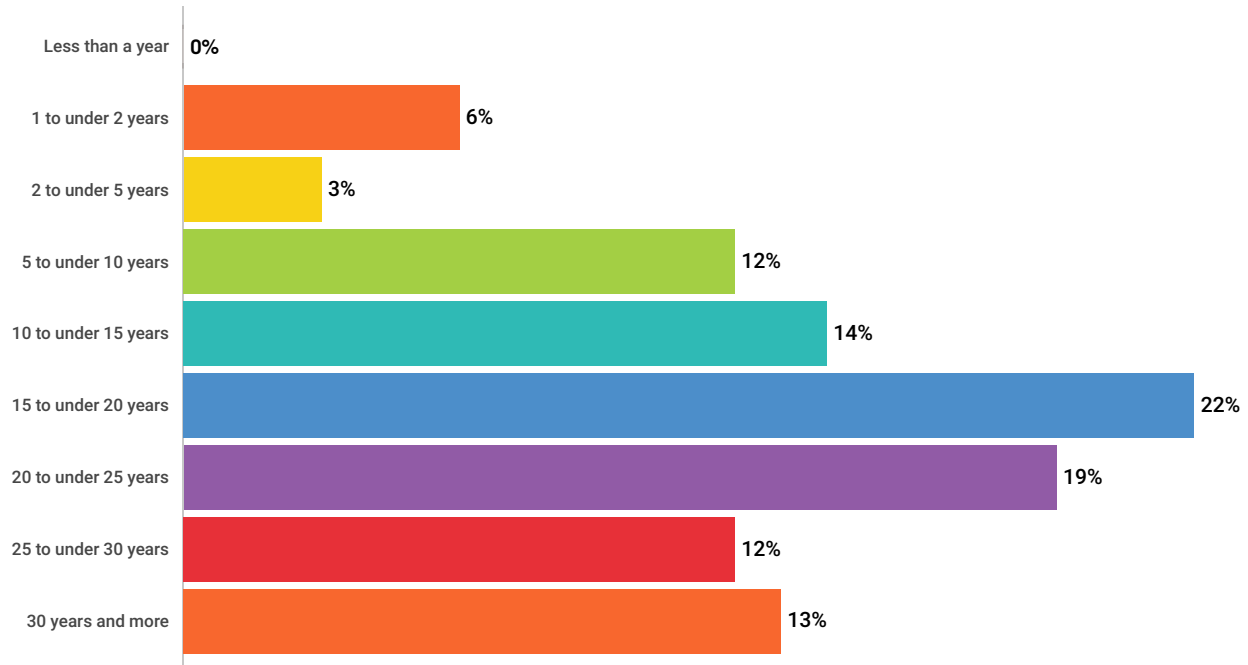
### Which of the following best describes your organization's annual U.S. media budget?

Base: 65



## How many years have you been working in marketing/advertising?

Base: 69



29 percent of respondents self-identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

## RESOURCES

[Resource List of Certified Diverse Suppliers for Marketing/Advertising](#)  
[ANA Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing](#)  
[Multicultural Marketing and Diversity Committee](#)  
[LGBTQ+ Forum](#)  
[DE&I Forum](#)

## ABOUT THE ANA

The mission of the ANA is to drive growth for marketing professionals, brands and businesses, the industry, and humanity. The ANA serves the marketing needs of 20,000 brands by leveraging the 12-point ANA Growth Agenda, which has been endorsed by the Global CMO Growth Council. The ANA's membership consists of U.S. and international companies, including client-side marketers, nonprofits, fundraisers, and marketing solutions providers (data science and technology companies, ad agencies, publishers, media companies, suppliers, and vendors). The ANA creates Marketing Growth Champions by serving, educating, and advocating for more than 50,000 industry members that collectively invest more than \$400 billion in marketing and advertising annually.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project leader on this initiative was Greg Wright, SVP at the ANA.

Additional ANA staffers who contributed to this report were Bill Duggan, group EVP; Latha Sarathy, chief research officer; Peter Kenigsberg, director; and Christina Batista, associate manager.

This report was designed by Ari Magen, director of creative services at the ANA.



**ANA**