
Genderation and Cultural Intelligence in the LGBTQ+ Marketplace

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ABSTRACT

The LGBTQ market is currently the fastest-growing consumer market in the U.S. and is on target to grow by millions in the U.S. in the next few years as GenZennials and Millennials identify as LGBTQ in more significant numbers than previous generations (Horbelt, 2018). Kantar Consulting and Hornet.com labeled the LGBTQ community, which includes the young queer people and identity-fluid individuals previously unseen and not catered to by marketers, “the \$1 trillion blind spot.” Ad revenue targeted at LGBTQ consumers remains only a fraction of the totals seen by other minority groups and a meagre 1.8% of all advertising on mainstream media in 2020 represented LGBTQ+ people (GLAAD, 2020). This research suggests that this lack of visibility is less about bias and exclusion and more about inexperience and risk aversion. Among the progressing generations, more LGBTQ people are choosing to identify as “fluid” rather than “non-fluid” (meaning gay or lesbian) as members of Gen Z are far more likely than older generations to be attracted to more than one sex and identify outside of the male/female binary. This research introduces the term "Genderation" to refer to *generational differences in LGBTQ identity and expression*. The paper discusses the need for cultural intelligence to effectively address the complexity of Genderation within the LGBTQ population. It introduces the CQ MKT process, illustrates how it can be applied to effectively navigate the Genderation of LGBTQ identities within the marketing process, and highlights Procter & Gamble’s brand-building and advertising strategies focused on LGBTQ consumers.

Keywords: LGBTQ consumers, LGBTQ Identity Development, Gen Z, Millennials, Digitalization, Social Media, Advertising. Social Advocacy

Generation and Cultural Intelligence in the LGBTQ+ Marketplace

The speed with which modern society has accommodated the world's vast array of gender and sexual identities may be the most critical cultural metamorphosis of our time. Young Thug, a slim rapper prone to wearing dresses, states that he feels "there's no such thing as gender" in a new commercial for Calvin Klein. The Oxford English Dictionary recently included Mx as a neutral replacement for titles like Mr. and Mrs. The video game "The Sims" has begun allowing players to create same-sex relationships and lifted gender restrictions on characters' clothing and hairstyles. We are participants in a societal revolution where "queer" has been reappropriated to represent this expanding spectrum of identities.

Increasing numbers of people per successive generation identify as LGBTQ+ (including a shockingly high 31% of Centennials, compared to only 8% of Boomers) (Jones 2021). Additionally, in recent years, there has been a notable shift away from the binary sexual identity of gay or straight that was embraced when the "Dream Market" was launched as a socio-political effort to gain social legitimacy in the marketplace (Penaloza, 1996). Among the progressing generations, more LGBTQ people are choosing to identify as "fluid" rather than "non-fluid" (meaning gay or lesbian) as members of Gen Z are far more likely than older generations to be attracted to more than one sex (Ipsos Report, 2021).

A more potent generational schism within broader society that plays out within the LGBTQ population appears around gender identity. Over the past decade, societal acceptance of gender as a fluid construct, especially among the younger population, has been acclaimed as a "gender revolution," a "cultural metamorphosis," and a "post-gender society." As with their sexual identities, young people are moving away from a binary representation of gender, a significant shift from previous generations (Wong, 2016). LGBTQ Gen X and Baby Boomers

primarily use the words "gay" or "lesbian" and "man" or "woman" to describe their sexual and gender identity. respectively. The formal addition of the term "lesbian" to the umbrella use of the term "gay" during the 1970s gay liberation movement, providing a singular differentiation of non-heterosexual people based on their sex, gives some insight into the binary thinking of previous generations of LGBTQ people. Younger generations appear more likely to identify in terminology that falls outside those previously traditional binaries (GLAAD/ Harris Poll, 2017). In practice, younger LGBTQ individuals appear to weave together their sexual and gender identities in a manner that cannot be captured by the L, the G, the B, or the T.

It was younger LGBTQ-identified generations' rejection of the binary thinking of previous generations on both sexual and gender identity that led to the reappropriation of the term "queer" as an umbrella term to represent individuals who define their sexual orientations and gender identities as anything other than "heterosexual" or "binary." However, while younger generations of LGBTQ consumers transcend the binary conceptions of their predecessors to embrace identity fluidity, GenZennials and Millennials appear to simultaneously embrace a micro-dissection of their queer gender/sexual identities expressed as distinct markers or labels in a multi-dimensional space (Galupo, 2016). These terms provide specific definitions of their gender and sexual identities and expressions to create a "Generation" gap with older LGBTQ individuals, who see their world as primarily two binary choices on two dimensions - male and female/ straight and gay. This research introduces the term "Generation" to refer to *generational differences in LGBTQ identity and expression*.

The LGBTQ market is currently the fastest-growing consumer market in the U.S. and is on target to grow by millions in the U.S. in the next few years as GenZennials and Millennials identify as LGBTQ in more significant numbers than previous generations (Horbelt, 2018).

Kantar Consulting and Hornet.com labeled the LGBTQ community, which includes the young queer people and identity-fluid individuals previously unseen and not catered to by marketers, “the \$1 trillion blind spot.” Despite the fact that the buying power of LGBTQ people in 2016 totaled \$1 trillion — which is on par with African-American and Hispanic consumers in America — ad revenue targeted at LGBTQ consumers remains only a fraction of the totals seen by other minority groups. Despite this market growth, a meagre 1.8% of all advertising on mainstream media in 2020 represented LGBTQ+ people (GLAAD, 2020).

This research suggests that this lack of visibility is less about bias and exclusion and more about inexperience and risk aversion. The imperatives of marketing, which needs to target large groups of people based on identifiable characteristics, mean that it can be hard to bring queer insights into marketing practice. Additionally, the gender binary continues to have social meaning for most people – LGBTQ+ people included – as it structures many economic, social, and political opportunities and can give meaning to personal identities. Advertisers acknowledge that the shifting landscape of identities and labels creates challenges for effective marketing communication. Seventy-eight percent of advertisers and 31% of agency executives agreed that achieving adequate representation is a challenge due to "nuances" in the LGBTQ community.

They are aware that they do not have the cultural expertise to effectively target this consumer population and that it's better to stay out of the game than to play it poorly. Within the ranks of the advertising industry, 81% of executives and 41% of agency leaders believe inauthentic depictions of LGBTQ consumers carry a stronger risk of backlash than no representation at all (GLAAD 2021). Given the lack of confidence that exists within the advertising industry, it is not surprising that 66% of LGBTQ+ individuals said they do not see their lifestyle represented in advertising, and 51% say they wish they could see more advertising

with families like theirs (Horbelt, 2018). Representation across gender and sexual identity within the advertising industry is so outside the realm of consciousness that those numbers are impossible to find. This lack of representation within the advertising and brand-building industries points to a troubling culture gap between LGBTQ consumers and the marketers who are tasked with empathizing with their pain points and solving their problems. In addition, advertising and brand-building teams are unlikely to reflect the type of generational diversity required to inherently capture the generational complexity of LGBTQ identity and expression. How can companies capture the non-binary mindset of a generation, or “Genderation,” when their decision-makers can only conceptualize lives lived in the heteronormative binary?

As demographic and identity shifts redefine the marketplace but remain unmatched in the marketing industry, Cultural Intelligence (CQ) can play a vital role in bridging the culture gap between marketers and the people who consume their products. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is a learned skill that reflects the ability to function effectively in different cultural contexts. It is conceptualized as a specific form of intelligence focused on an individual’s ability to handle intercultural situations (Ang and Dyne 2008). For the vast majority of marketers, their culture is shaped by the heteronormative binary of being straight and cis-gender. CQ can bring cross-cultural empathy and perspective-taking to marketing planning and practice. This research introduces the CQ MKT process which will enable advertisers and brand builders to capture the non-binary mindset of a generation, or “Genderation,” if it is purposefully infused into LGBTQ+ marketing decision-making.

Sexual minority individuals are often categorized together as having common experiences surrounding their identities (Fassinger and Arseneau 2007, Flanders 2017), resulting in within-group differences being left unexplored. This research explores the influence of age

cohorts or generational belonging on LGBTQ identity and expression. It provides empirical evidence of the societal shifts in LGBTQ identity development and expression leading to "Generation" within the LGBTQ+ consumer population. Additionally, it provides direction for both socially-minded and growth-minded marketers who wish to embrace the exploding LGBTQ consumer market but struggle to identify traditionally defined marketing segments within this maze of fluidity, micro-expression, and generational differences. This paper discusses the need for cultural intelligence and the application of the CQ MKT process to effectively bridge the cultural divide between advertisers and LGBTQ consumers of all identities. It concludes with a discussion of how the CQ MKT process can be applied to effectively navigate the Generation of LGBTQ identities. While many companies and agencies remain tentative to represent the web of identities and expression that exists within the LGBTQ consumer population, CPG giant Procter & Gamble received a 2020 Outie Award from Out and Equal in recognition of its leadership in advancing equality for LGBTQ people in workplaces and marketplaces globally. The paper will highlight Procter & Gamble's brand-building and advertising strategies focused on LGBTQ consumers to illustrate each of the four stages of the CQ MKT process.

GENDERATION: Generational Differences in LGBTQ Identities

While the concept of a generation has a long history and can be found in ancient literature,^[17] there are also psychological and sociological dimensions in the sense of belonging and identity which may define a generation. The concept of a generation can be used to locate particular birth cohorts in specific historical and cultural circumstances, such as the "Baby boomers". Generational Theory recognizes how youth experience their generation, and how that changes based on where they reside in the world. Karl Mannheim, in his 1952 book *Essays on*

the Sociology of Knowledge, asserted the belief that people are shaped through lived experiences as a result of social change (Sagarin 1969.) According to Mannheim, people are significantly influenced by the socio-historical environment (in particular, notable events that involve them actively) of their youth; giving rise, on the basis of shared experience, to social cohorts that in turn influence events that shape future generations (Mannheim 1952). Based on the way these shared lived experiences shape a generation in regard to values, the result is that the new generation will challenge the older generation's values, resulting in tension. This challenge between generations and the tension that arises is a defining point for understanding generations and what separates them (Grenier 2007.) In 2019, Pew Research Center defined respective generations as:

- **The Silent Generation:** Born 1928-1945 (74-91 years old)
- **Baby Boomers:** Born 1946-1964 (55-73 years old)
- **Generation X:** Born 1965-1980 (39-54 years old)
- **Millennials:** Born 1981-1996 (23-38 years old)
- **Generation Z:** Born 1997-2012 (7-22 years old)

The term "Generation" captures *generational differences in LGBTQ identity and expression*. Generation is conceptualized as (i) increased sexual fluidity among younger generations (ii) increased gender fluidity among younger generations, and (ii) the increase in both the fluidity and specificity of LGBTQ identity expression among younger generations.

LGBTQ Sexual Identity: Monosexual to Plurisexual

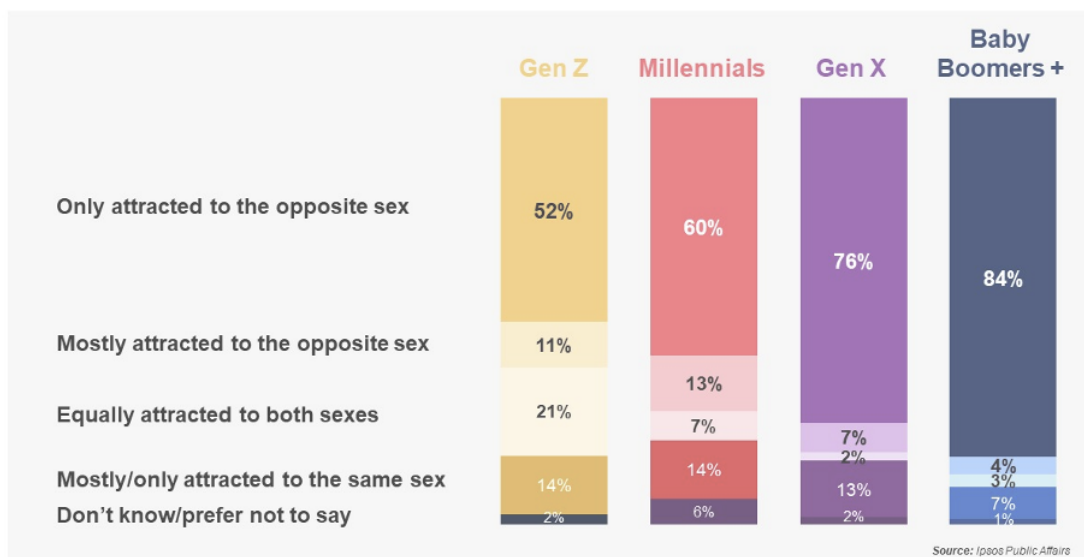
Sexual orientation is a multi-faceted concept that reflects an individual's personal romantic and sexual interests (Diamond and Butterworth 2008). Sexual orientation is often understood as including three separate dimensions (attraction, behavior, and identity) which do not always neatly coincide (Galupo 2018, Galupo et al. 2015). Even these dimensions of sexual orientation provide only a partial understanding of a person's sexuality. However, researchers

often use measures that focus on identifying areas of attraction. In *The Trouble with Normal*, queer theorist Michael Warner (1999) made the following observation about sexual identity:

As ways of classifying people's sex, these apparently neutral terms ("homosexual" and "heterosexual") are of relatively recent vintage, and only make sense against a certain cultural background. So, however much they might involve genetic or biological factors, they also involve changes in consciousness and culture. (p. 10)

Identity is a social construct, defined and given value only when evaluated in terms relative to a specific cultural context. The classification of "heterosexual" and "homosexual" delineates sexual identity based on the sex of the object of attraction as either opposite-sex or same-sex, with cultural normativity placed on opposite-sex attraction. As socio-cultural acceptance of non-heterosexual identities has grown over the past two decades, younger generations have increasingly identified as non-heterosexual. A 2021 Ipsos study (see Figure 1) finds that fewer younger Americans say they are only attracted to the opposite sex when compared to older cohorts. The survey asked 1,127 adults in the U.K. and 1,005 in the U.S. and got similar results (Ipsos 2021). While the vast majority of Gen X (76%) and Baby Boomers (84%) are only attracted to the opposite sex, Gen Z (52%) shows an almost even split between those who are attracted exclusively to the opposite sex and those who are not.

FIGURE 1: Sexual identity Differences by Generation (Source: Ipsos Public Affairs)



Base: 1,005 U.S. adults ages 18+ interviewed online, February 22-23, 2021



Beyond categorizing sexual orientation by the sex of the object, sexual orientations have also been categorized based on the number of sexes to whom they are attracted. The term "Monosexual" applies to people attracted to a single gender and "Plurisexual" to people attracted to multiple genders. Over the past two decades, younger generations have increasingly moved towards exploring, claiming, and expressing plurisexual identities over the monosexual identities of their LGBTQ+ predecessors. A closer look at the data in Figure 1 quantifies this noteworthy trend within the growing LGBTQ population as an ever-increasing proportion of the U.S. population rejects the notion of sexual identity operating on any normative binary. Forty six percent of Gen Z and 34% of Millennials express attraction to both sexes or identify as plurisexual, embracing identities of sexual fluidity that creates a stark contrast to the 14 - 22% of older generations who do likewise.

LGBTQ Gender Identity: Binary to Fluid

According to Fusion magazine's Massive Millennial Poll, 50% of the 1,000 people between the ages of 18 and 34 who were interviewed by telephone agreed with the statement "Gender is a spectrum, and some people fall outside conventional categories" (Wong 2016). Queer theory scholars have long suggested that gender is fluid, flexible, and subject to change. Judith Butler's work is key to this understanding. She argues that gender is performative – meaning that the performance of gender is what makes gender exist (Butler 2002).

Consistent with Butler's conceptualism, Gen Z and Millennials have far less binary ideas of gender than older generations and expect this to be replicated in the marketplace. According to a 2020 study by the Pew Research Center, 59% of Gen Zers and 50% of Millennials say forms or online profiles should include options other than "man" and "woman", compared with 40% of Xers, 37% of Baby Boomers, and roughly 32% of the Silent Generation (Parker and Igielnik

2020). This trend towards fluidity is also evident among those who identify as transgender. Gen Zers are much more likely than those in older generations to say they personally know someone who prefers to go by gender-neutral pronouns, with 35% saying so, compared with 25% of Millennials, 16% of Gen Xers, 12% of Boomers, and just 7% of Silents. Within the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey of almost 12,000 individuals who did not identify as CIS-Gender, non-binary people made up over one-third of the sample (National Center for Transgender Equality 2016). Non-binary is a term that is often used to describe people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify as no gender, as a gender other than male or female, or as more than one gender. Members of Gen Z are also similar to Millennials in their views on society's acceptance of those who do not identify as men or women. Roughly half of Gen Zers (50%) and Millennials (47%) think that society is not accepting enough of these individuals. Smaller shares of Gen Xers (39%), Boomers (36%), and those in the Silent Generation (32%) say the same (Parker and Igielnik 2020).

While this concept might seem radical, many societies around the world acknowledge more than two genders. For instance, India legally recognizes three genders. According to the country's Supreme Court: "It is the right of every human being to choose their gender." In the U.S., nonbinary gender identities have quickly gone from obscurity to prominence in American public life, with a growing acceptance of gender-neutral pronouns, such as "they, them, and theirs." All U.S. states now have a gender-neutral option for state I.D.'s and driver's licenses; however, the rigor needed to obtain this option range from no provider certification required in 17 states and D.C. to proof of surgery, court order, or amended birth certificate in nine states (Clarke 2019).

LGBTQ Identity Expression: Binary, Queer, or Complex

Sexuality Marking serves as a way to assert one's sexuality to others through language, behavior, aesthetics, or other non-verbal cues (Davila et al. 2019, Gonzalez et al. 2017, Hartman 2013, Morgan and DavisDelano 2016). Sexual marking behaviors influence perceptions of an individual's sexual identity and may be done intentionally through the language or label they use (Morgan and DavisDelano 2016). Queer is often used as an umbrella term to describe non-cisgender and non-heterosexual individuals or those outside of traditional gender roles or sexual binaries (Morandini et al. 2016). Queer not only refers to an identity label but a framework of thought through queer theory. Rather than create socially acceptable forms of non-normative identities, queer theory rejects the idea of assimilation to the norm (Barker and Scheele 2016). This theory resists the categorization of individuals and also resists the binary constructs that surround sexuality and gender (Callis 2014). The term "Queer" has been embraced by younger generations to encompass their mindset of identities that have the commonality of being non-straight or non-CIS gender. However, many older members of the LGBTQ+ population struggle to embrace the term "queer," given its history as a pejorative term. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's leading LGBTQ+ rights organization, aware that its main donor base comprises those aging members of the LGBTQ+ community, did not transition from LGBT to LGBTQ until 2016 - after Facebook, OkCupid, and Tinder had embraced identity fluidity. The organization's decision to adopt the term was driven by predominant use by youth who refer to their sexual orientation as "queer" and their gender identity as "genderqueer" while others use personal descriptions of more fluid identities (HRC 2016). When announcing its adoption of the term, the HRC was careful to acknowledge the sentiments of older members of the community. It stated that "Queer" is a word with a complicated modern history – both used in

a defiant chant originated by LGBTQ+ rights activists more than a quarter-century ago to confront bigotry and hijacked by hate-mongers doubling down on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity."

Additionally, the queer theory understanding of queer identity creates a broad spectrum of inclusion; however, even if a person fits within that description, it does not necessarily mean they endorse a queer sexual identity label. As an identity label, queer is often seen as a "non-label"; queer is fluid and changing, and therefore hard to define (Callis 2014). While the adoption of "Queer" is an attempt to bundle all identities that are neither heterosexual nor cis-gender with one sweeping, though troubled, term, during the past several years, there has been a proliferation of names used to describe variances in sexual orientation and gender identity (Zimmer, Solomon, & Carson, 2014). Many of these labels are newer creations (e.g., pansexual, androgyne, genderqueer), and some are unique to specific cultures (e.g., two-spirit in Native American traditions, fa'afafine in Samoa, hijra in South Asia). The list of labels for variations in sexual orientation or gender identity is continuously changing and expanding (See Table 1).

Research suggests that there may be generational differences in the expression of LGBTQ identity. When describing their sexual identity, as plurisexual individuals, Gen Z and Millennials are more likely than typically older monosexual individuals to define and explain their sexual identity labels. Older LGBTQ+ generations will typically use monosexual labels to communicate attraction to a single gender (e.g., straight, gay, and lesbian) while younger generations often use plurisexual labels to communicate the potential for attraction to more than one gender (e.g., bisexual, pansexual, queer, and fluid; Galupo et al. 2015). It is also common for plurisexual individuals to endorse multiple sexuality labels (Galupo et al. 2015, Rust 1993). Because labels are often used to relate to others, it makes sense that terms and usage may be

adjusted to fit the audience and to convey specific aspects of attraction (Galupo 2018, Rust 1993).

Hence, while one might predict that the increased fluidity in identity-based markets would precipitate a decline in the language of identity among gender and sexually non-normative people with deference to the use of "Queer," the reverse appears to be true. Given the importance of user profiles in the online dating world, users are eager to communicate their individual mix of sexual and gender identities accurately. This has led to an explosion in the usage of distinct categories and accompanying micro-labels to tag the intersection of specific gender and sexual identities, rather than a fluid spectrum. In response to intense pressure from its Millennial and Gen Z users, Facebook announced in 2014 that it would allow users to select a custom gender identity beyond the dichotomous labels "male" and "female," and offered a list of 58 gender options (from which the user could select up to 10) (See Table 1). The following year, in February 2015, Facebook announced that it had modified the custom gender option after receiving feedback that some individuals found it difficult to express their sex with the pre-populated list of 58 options. It now offers a free-form field where users can enter in any term they want to describe their gender identity and are still able to include up to 10 labels.

Since late 2014, users of online dating platform, OkCupid, could choose from 22 potential choices for gender identity and an additional 20 for sexual orientation, including "asexual, bisexual, demisexual, gay, homoflexible, heteroflexible, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, sapiosexual, straight" (See Table 1). OkCupid users could splice their gender/sexual identity among 440 potential combinations and require the same level of specificity for their

Table 1: GENERATION of LGBTQ+ Identities

LGBTQ+ GENERATION	Approach to Sexual Identity	Approach to Gender Identity	Expression of LGBTQ Identity	Sexual Identity Markings	Gender Identity Markings
GEN X & BABY BOOMERS	Monosexual	Binary, fixed	Binary Identity Labels + Codification of Expression	<i>Gay, Lesbian</i>	<i>CIS Gender, Transgender</i>
GEN Z & MILLENNIALS Increasingly non-heterosexual	Plurisexual	Fluid, flexible, and subject to change	Queer Identity Labels + Plurisexual Expression	<i>Allosexual, Allosexism, Androsexual, Asexual, Aromantic, Autosexual, Autoromatic, Bicurious, Bisexual, Biromantic, Cupiosexual, Demisexual, Demiromantic, Graysexual, Grayromantic, Gynesexual, Heteroflexible, Homoflexible, Libidoist asexual, Monosexual, Non-libidoist asexual, Omnisexual, Pansexual, Panromantic, Polysexual, Pomosexual, Sapiosexual, Sex-averse, Sex-favorable, Sex-indifferent, Sex-repulsed, Skoliosexual, Spectrasexual</i>	<i>Agender, Androgyne, Androgynous, Bigender, Cis, Cis Female, Cis Male, Cis Man, Cis Woman, Cisgender Female, Cisgender Male, Cisgender Man, Cisgender Woman, Female, Female to Male, FTM, Gender Fluid, Gender Nonconforming, Gender Questioning, Gender Variant, Genderqueer, Intersex, Male, Male to Female, MTF, Neither, Neutrois, Non-binary, Other, Pangender, Trans, Trans Female, Trans Male, Trans Man, Trans Person, Trans Woman, Trans*, Trans* Female, Trans* Male, Trans* Man, Trans* Person, Trans* Woman, Transfeminine, Transgender, Transgender Female, Transgender Male, Transgender Man, Transgender Person, Transgender Woman, Transmasculine, Transsexual, Transsexual Female, Transsexual Male, Transsexual Man, Transsexual Person, Transsexual Woman, Two-spirit.</i>

matches. In 2017, Tinder expanded the dating pool with the launch of its "More Genders" feature that provided users 37 "More" auto-fill terms for gender on the app. After 12 months of

availability, the app announced that "More Genders" had made 25 million matches worldwide (Carman 2016).

The tendency for higher numbers of younger consumers to use online dating apps and identity-based social media groups more than older consumers is causing a generational schism in the expression of LGBTQ identity within the LGBTQ+ population. A fifty-year-old woman who came up through the second-wave feminism movement (and, at some point in her life, may have owned a Subaru) is likely to choose between gay, lesbian, and bisexual to label her orientation (even if she wishes there were better-sounding labels!) Despite the multitude of categories and labels available to her, she will likely treat gender labels as a binary choice of male (meaning trans in this case) or female. Most likely, gender is expressed through clothing, mannerisms, personal style, and other means of codification (Kates, 2002) rather than by adopting a specific gender and sexuality identification and label. Given the blurring of online and offline worlds in which society now exists, younger generations adopt these labels for identity expression in the real world. (Match 2015, Davilla et al. 2019)

The Need for Marketing with Cultural Intelligence

This shifting landscape of identities and labels creates challenges for effective marketing communication (Petchesky 2009). Attempts to be inclusive can lead to cumbersome lists (Zimmer et al., 2014), and attempts to be efficient can lead to reductionist language, which leaves some individuals feeling misunderstood, excluded, marginalized, or invisible (Petchesky 2009). Individuals in the process of exploring or attempting to understand sexual and gender diversity—in one's self or others—may feel caught in the crossfire (Grigoriou, 2014). Dacumos (2006) cautions, however, that this rejection of traditional labels and push for new terminology

by younger generations leads to "a type of super-consumer custom-made identity that leaves you with very little upon which to build a movement" - or a marketplace!

Beyond this, marketers must recognize that "Genderation" may require more nuanced approaches to different generations within the LGBTQ+ consumer marketplace. Marketers must recognize that the identity label explosion that has hit the headlines in popular press tends to be far more prevalent with the millennial and GenZ population than older LGBTQ+ generations. The tendency for higher numbers of younger consumers to use online dating apps and identity-based social media groups than older consumers is causing a generational schism in the meaning of labels within the LGBTQ+ population. Many queer scholars would caution against identity-based marketing in an era of identity proliferation. (Gosine, 2015). In order to be recognized, a consumer has to assume a recognizable identity. For most people, this means self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, but this can be an essentializing identity category that restricts freedoms.

Conversely, consumers who do not define themselves in relation to a gender or sexual identity binary may find their identities erased, misrepresented, and misunderstood in the marketplace (Lind, 2009). Individuals who fall outside the traditional categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex can thus be invalidated. Those who do identify with these categories often have to fit themselves into stereotypical ideas of what LGBTQ+ means to be socially and politically recognized. Today's, non-conforming millennials and GenZ consumers are growing up without the stigma and lack of social legitimacy that defined previous generations of LGBT individuals. They are not looking to hide, and they expect to be recognized. Marketers will need to commit to doing the work involved in understanding the complexity of the intersectional identities within the new LGBTQ+ marketplace while also recognizing the

impact of generation to avoid alienating older, more binary-thinking generations. They will need to show empathy and be able to walk in the shoes of all LGBTQ+ consumers.

Unfortunately, the advertising industry appears ill-equipped to take on this cultural challenge. As sexual and gender identity shifts redefine the marketplace but remain unmatched in the marketing industry, a troubling culture gap exists between LGBTQ+ consumers and the marketers who are tasked with empathizing with their pain points and solving their problems. Despite the changing demographics of the U.S., the marketing industry continues to reflect the populations of the past. A recent report by *ANA's Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing (AIMM)*, found that ANA client-side marketers continue to make significant progress in achieving gender equality among CMOs, but there has been little headway made in improving LGBTQ+ representation (ANA, 2020). Representation across sexual identity is so outside the realm of consciousness within the marketing industry that those numbers are impossible to find. Additionally, advertising and brand-building teams are unlikely to include the type of age diversity that would allow them to have a cultural understanding of generational differences that exist within the LGBTQ population.

Cultural Intelligence can play a vital role in bridging the culture gap that often exists between marketers and the multiple generations of LGBTQ+ people who consume their products. As mentioned earlier, *Cultural Intelligence (CQ)* is the ability to function effectively in different cultural contexts and is conceptualized as a specific form of intelligence focused on an individual's ability to handle intercultural situations (Ang and Dyne 2008). Culture, defined by social psychologist Geert Hofstede as the “collective programming of the mind,” represents a set of “standard operating procedures” or behavioral norms and cognitions that are shared by individuals in some distinct group of people but different from normative beliefs and behaviors

shared within some other population. Culture has been defined as “deeply rooted patterns of values, customs, attitudes and beliefs that distinguish one group from another.” As such, culture may be broadly defined by race, gender, nationality, sexual identity, age, or any system that can be defined by distinct values and behaviors. The Generation that exists within the LGBTQ consumer population is an artifact of socio-cultural shifts that have occurred since LGBT activists deliberate creation of a marketplace to gain social visibility and legitimacy in the 1990s. To understand Generation is to understand the LGBTQ culture and the forces that have shaped it over the past three decades from the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” socio-political puritanism of the 1990s to the legality of same-sex marriage that exists today.

The CQ MKT PROCESS

In 2003, P. Christopher Earley and Soon Ang developed a model of CQ that identifies and measures four components of Cultural Intelligence: motivational, cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral and developed a scale to measure an individual’s cultural intelligence.

Motivational CQ reflects the ability and willingness to use knowledge about different cultures in order to achieve a culturally appropriate response. *Cognitive CQ* refers to factual knowledge about cultures, including knowledge of cultural norms and conventions accepted in different societies. *Metacognitive CQ* refers to an individual’s level of conscious cultural awareness during cross-cultural interactions. *Behavioral CQ* reflects a person’s ability to acquire or adapt behaviors appropriate for a new culture.

In practice, CQ development begins with self-awareness of the influence of one’s own culture on one’s thinking, attitudes, and behavior. CQ can bring empathy and perspective-taking to the marketing planning and practice in diverse and dynamic environments if it is purposefully

infused into marketing decision-making. Livermore (2011) brought the psychometric Cultural Intelligence scale into the commercial world as *CQ DRIVE* (Motivational CQ), *CQ KNOWLEDGE* (Cognitive CQ), *CQ STRATEGY* (Metacognitive CQ), and *CQ ACTION* (Behavioral CQ). The CQ MKT process builds off of these application-based terms to develop a process for infusing cultural intelligence in the conventional marketing process of: 1. Clarifying the Marketing Objectives, 2. Assessing the Market Situation, 3. Developing Marketing Strategy, and 4. Marketing Execution.

In the following section, the four stages of the CQ MKT process are introduced and discussed within the context of P&G’s brand-building and advertising initiatives for the LGBTQ consumer marketplace (See Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: CQ MKT PROCESS



CQ MKT | DRIVE

CQ DRIVE is one’s interest and confidence to interact effectively and appropriately when you encounter differences, diversity, and cross-cultural situations (Livermore, 2011). The motivation to do this work and make this effort is often overlooked.

CQ MKT | DRIVE requires a commitment to inclusion throughout the marketing process. It requires a marketer to be motivated to learn and to adapt to new and diverse settings. She will need the confidence to interact effectively and appropriately across cultures and difference. She needs the motivation to develop her self-awareness of the cultural lens through which she makes meaning of differences. She needs the motivation to develop awareness of the diverse other. In this stage, marketers must learn about sources of unconscious and explicit bias, both at an individual level and within the marketing process. This awareness is designed to promote a commitment to marketing that is inclusive, culturally-nuanced, and free of explicit and unconscious bias.

CQ MKT | DRIVE in Practice: Procter & Gamble has a stated goal of 10% LGBTQ representation within its workforce. While the company works to reach this goal, it has strong enough CQ MKT | Drive to know that it must bridge the LGBTQ culture gap with cultural intelligence. To avoid the potential pitfalls of brand-building for LGBTQ+ consumer populations, Procter & Gamble works to ensure that LGBTQ+ consumers are “baked-in” rather than “bolted-on” to mainstream brand strategies. Procter & Gamble is also committed to addressing the hesitancy among marketers in tackling LGBTQ-related work. The company partnered with LGBTQ media advocacy group GLAAD on an initiative that seeks to help advertisers and agencies develop more authentic and inclusive messaging strategies. The Visibility Project serves as a resource for industry best practices and thought leadership around LGBTQ representation. When launching the Visibility Project, P&G Chief Brand Officer Marc Pritchard said:

“Equality is not only a top priority at P&G – it’s a responsibility. As one of the world’s largest advertisers, we’re committed to using our voice and reach to increase visibility of the LGBTQ+ community in advertising and media. We strive for accurate portrayal and will continue to take a stand to eliminate bias and advance equality. Through The Visibility

Project, we hope to learn more about the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community in order to elevate their visibility in our content and communication.”

It is P&G's most significant program to accelerate LGBTQ advertising leadership, with the packaged goods giant committing to spending more than \$1 million over the next three years to support the project. Phase one of The Visibility Project looks to bring more Fortune 100 advertisers on as partners. They will then work with the GLAAD Media Institute on improving inclusion practices internally and in their consumer-facing marketing.

CQ MKT | KNOWLEDGE

CQ KNOWLEDGE is the degree to which an individual understands how cultural influences guide the thinking and behavior of the people in that culture. It comes from observation, research, and experience.

CQ MKT | KNOWLEDGE doesn't necessarily mean that a marketer has to know every detail of a consumer's cultural identity. It's about knowing how that cultural identity, in general, shapes consumer's behaviors, values, and beliefs. When that is understood, individual "rules" of behavior make much more sense. Within this stage, marketers must gain an actionable understanding of different cultural identities and environmental drivers that shape identities, using innovative research methods. In addition to a meaningful application of secondary and empirical data, empathy and perspective-taking are required to provide a deep intuitive understanding of the motivations and needs of consumers whose lives differ from one's own.

CQ MKT | KNOWLEDGE in Practice: Internally, P&G compensates for the lack of LGBTQ+ lived cultural knowledge among its brand builders in its internal ranks by seeking knowledge, direction, and insights from culturally diverse social media influencers and researchers with cultural expertise. It provides ongoing training to employees to provide a shared cultural

knowledge of LGBTQ+ consumer populations in the marketplace. P&G Chief Brand Officer Marc Pritchard said in a recent press statement, "We are building LGBTQ marketing into the fabric of how we build brands by understanding invaluable insights that not only responsibly represent the values and culture of the LGBTQ community, but also link closely to the character of our brands — never stereotyping, never misappropriating. But we all have a lot to learn and we are truly at the beginning of our journey to master LGBTQ inclusion in our brand building efforts."

CQ MKT | STRATEGY

CQ strategy is the extent to which you are aware of what is going on in a multicultural or diverse situation, verify, and plan accordingly. Individuals with high CQ strategy think about diversity and multicultural opportunities and challenges. They demonstrate meta-cognition to identify, explain, and plan for dealing with differences. This meta-cognition means there is self-awareness of your own cultural perspective and awareness of the different meaning-making that diverse others are very likely going to demonstrate.

CQ MKT | STRATEGY requires that a marketer plans ahead and verifies his expectations and assumptions when developing cross-cultural marketing. If he were to solely rely on CQ knowledge or cognition, there is a risk of stereotyping people. He must tap into his CQ MKT | KNOWLEDGE of specific cultures and consider potential strategies to optimize communication efficacy. CQ MKT | STRATEGY enables the marketers to reflect and revise beyond general and simplified norms.

CQ MKT | STRATEGY in Practice: P&G developed the 4R Model for LGBTQ brand-building that focuses on Reach, Representation, Relevancy, and Resonance. P&G appointed senior management to convert culturally-driven insights and tensions within the LGBTQ consumer

population into bold marketing that meets the goals of the 4R Model. It has a social advocacy goal of creating awareness of LGBTQ+ experience and forging attitude change among the “Movable middle” of the American population. Given all of the phenomena involved in Genderation within the LGBTQ population, P&G has found that the most successful strategic approach to LGBTQ consumers may be to steer clear of identity-based strategies that may splinter the LGBTQ consumer population. It uses its CQ MKT | KNOWLEDGE to avoid advertising that can be seen as exploitative or “rainbow washing” by LGBTQ consumers by focusing on identifying the insights and human truths in the CQ MKT | STRATEGY stage that impact all LGBTQ+ people, regardless of their age, and the work for social change in broader society on their behalf.

CQ MKT | ACTION

CQ action brings together CQ drive, CQ knowledge, and CQ strategy. CQ action is behavior based on motivation, cognition, and meta-cognition. CQ action is your ability to act effectively and appropriately in different cultures. It includes your flexibility in communicating and adapting to different cultural norms. People with high CQ action know when to adapt and when not to adapt. This moves them beyond motivation, understanding, and strategy to actually engage diversity and intercultural relationships.

In the CQ MKT | ACTION stage, marketers must learn how to effectively activate marketing that resolves individual consumer tensions derived from cultural or social identity. As such, they will learn how to activate marketing that (1) creates value in consumers' lives, (2) delivers on brand objectives, and (3) creates social change. After the experience with difference and diversity, marketers must think about and reflect on it. They must cycle back to the CQ MKT | DRIVE stage to refine their approach to inclusive marketing, update their mental maps and

consider potential strategies to improve their cross-cultural marketing communication and interaction.

CQ MKT | ACTION in Practice: Over the past two years, P&G has activated the 4R Model with groundbreaking advertising that provides mainstream audiences with perspective-taking on the societal struggles of LGBTQ+ identity as an activation of its mission to be a *Force for Growth and a Force for Good*. Recognizing the power of advertising in shaping cultural norms and attitudes and mitigating bias, the company has committed to increasing the visibility and accurate representation of historically underrepresented consumers in its advertising and digital media.

The Pause speaks to all LGBTQ people, regardless of age, who understand the struggle that exists every day to be their authentic selves in a heteronormative society while *Home for the Holidays* captures the "code-switching" that so many people, but especially LGBTQ people, do when they return home for family occasions.

Focusing more specifically on gender fluidity, P&G's Gillette brand is taking steps to be more inclusive with how gender is represented in its marketing. After facing both backlash and acclaim in 2019 over its toxic masculinity ad, Gillette tackled gender again that year. Gillette committed to embrace and promote inclusive representations of gender in #MyBestSelf campaign. To demonstrate that "The Best a Man Can Get" includes all men, Gillette released a short film titled 'First Shave' which stars Samson, a real transgender teen, who is being taught how to shave for the first time by his father. This month, Gillette launched a social media campaign that took an unprecedented step in a shaving category defined by gender norms. It dropped the word "man" from its slogan altogether and switched to "The Best YOU Can Get." Working on the human insight that 60% of LGBTQ people change their hair when they come

out, P&G's Pantene brand linked this to gender identity in creating the #beautifulLGBTQ campaign in the U.S, Hair has no Gender in Europe and Canada, This Hair is Me in Japan.

P&G restarts the CQ MKT process with enhanced cultural intelligence and cycles back to CQ MKT | DRIVE. The company conducts post-campaign marketing testing to ensure its LGBTQ+ advertising resonates with under-represented consumers as authentic and non-exploitative. They also work to encourage other brands to join in their social advocacy stance. P&G's new "They Will See You" short film, accompanying the collaborative research with GLAAD, details how global brands can play their part in growing LGBTQ visibility, including in local communities.

Conclusion

To be LGBTQ is to embrace diversity and to face adversity with resilience. To represent this authentically, marketers will need to commit to doing the work involved in understanding the complexity of fluid but marked identities within the new LGBTQ marketplace while honoring the sensibilities of older generations of LGBTQ consumers. To truly represent and resonate with these consumers, advertisers have to crawl, walk, or dance in the shoes of all LGBTQ consumers. They have to understand the importance of their diverse identities, understand the identity intersectionalities that defy traditional approaches to market segmentation, and capture what binds them together at a human level.

In 2020, Pritchard's claim that "doing good" drives firm performance played out as P&G's fiscal year 2020 net sales were \$71 billion, an increase of five percent versus the previous year. P&G achieved the double win of realizing the market potential of marketing with cultural intelligence as a Force for Growth while using its brand power to enhance the cultural

intelligence of its consumers as a Force for Good. More marketers must recognize that they don't have to choose between market growth and social good and that a lack of internal diversity within the marketing industry shouldn't be a barrier to marketing activation that resonates with LGBTQ+ consumers that have been historically invisible or inauthentically represented in the marketplace. An investment in developing the cultural intelligence of the marketers around LGBTQ+ identities, lives, and experiences who drive their brands can achieve both market growth and social change—and younger “generations” will accept nothing less.

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