

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION GUIDE

## DURING THE CREATIVE PROCESS



# On a Journey Towards More Diverse Creative

Diversity is a priority which impacts not only internal inclusion, but also external representation. Inclusive workplaces inspire diversity of thinking, which drives creativity & innovation. This allows us to better understand and reflect consumers, and in turn helps brands differentiate. Inclusive marketing and communications not only make a positive impact on society but also have been shown to outperform from an effectiveness perspective.

At all stages of the marketing process, including but not limited to the communications we create, there is an opportunity to better represent. We can all go on a journey from not considering diverse audiences to fairly representing them, or even purposefully driving action for change – wherever you are in that process we hope to help you take the next step.

Often the barriers to representative creative come in the form of unconscious bias. This guide to the creative process, initially created by the WFA, aims to highlight some of the simple nudges and critical questions marketers can use to steer themselves throughout.

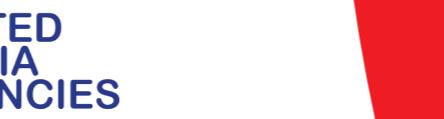
**Marc Fauconnier**  
President ACC



**Mira De Maeyer**  
President UBA



**Hugues Rey**  
President UMA



# Definition Diversity & Inclusion

More and more brands come to understand that it is important to pay attention to diversity and inclusion. And for good reason. The fact that we live in a hyperdiverse society increases the importance of creating diverse and inclusive environments and marketing. Diversity is all around us. This can lead to challenges but more importantly, it should encourage you to work towards more inclusion. It will not only be good for the brand you are working for, but for society as a whole.

Diversity refers to the differences between people's backgrounds and experiences. This generally relates to identity factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, age, sexual orientation or ability. It is important to look at these differences from an intersectional lens and consider how everyone's identity impacts their life, experiences and views. Because everyone's identity and views are so different, it can be a challenge, but should be a goal, to diversify your audience and attract a large audience through marketing. Furthermore, having a diverse group of people working together can be very valuable – this has been proven by various studies – but diversity is not enough. Working towards inclusion is the goal.

Inclusion refers to the active steps that are being taken to make

**Taha Rihani**  
Founder Allyens

sure everyone feels included, welcomed, represented and valued. Imagine a time when you felt excluded. Now imagine what should have happened for you to feel included. This often involves the consideration of people's differences, people's similarities and a common goal. Now apply this to the brand you are working for. How is your brand excluding people? What can you change to improve this? By constantly making these reflections you will better understand what inclusion is, why it is important and how you can work towards it.

Inclusion should be achieved both internally, in the way your organisation is structured, and externally, by the messages you share with the world. With inclusive marketing you strive for the authentic representation of a diverse audience. This is achieved through being accessible and starting from common values. Inclusive marketing amplifies diverse voices, eliminates prejudice and has a positive impact on society. For your brand, this will result in positive feelings, which increases loyalty and strengthens your relationship with your target audience.

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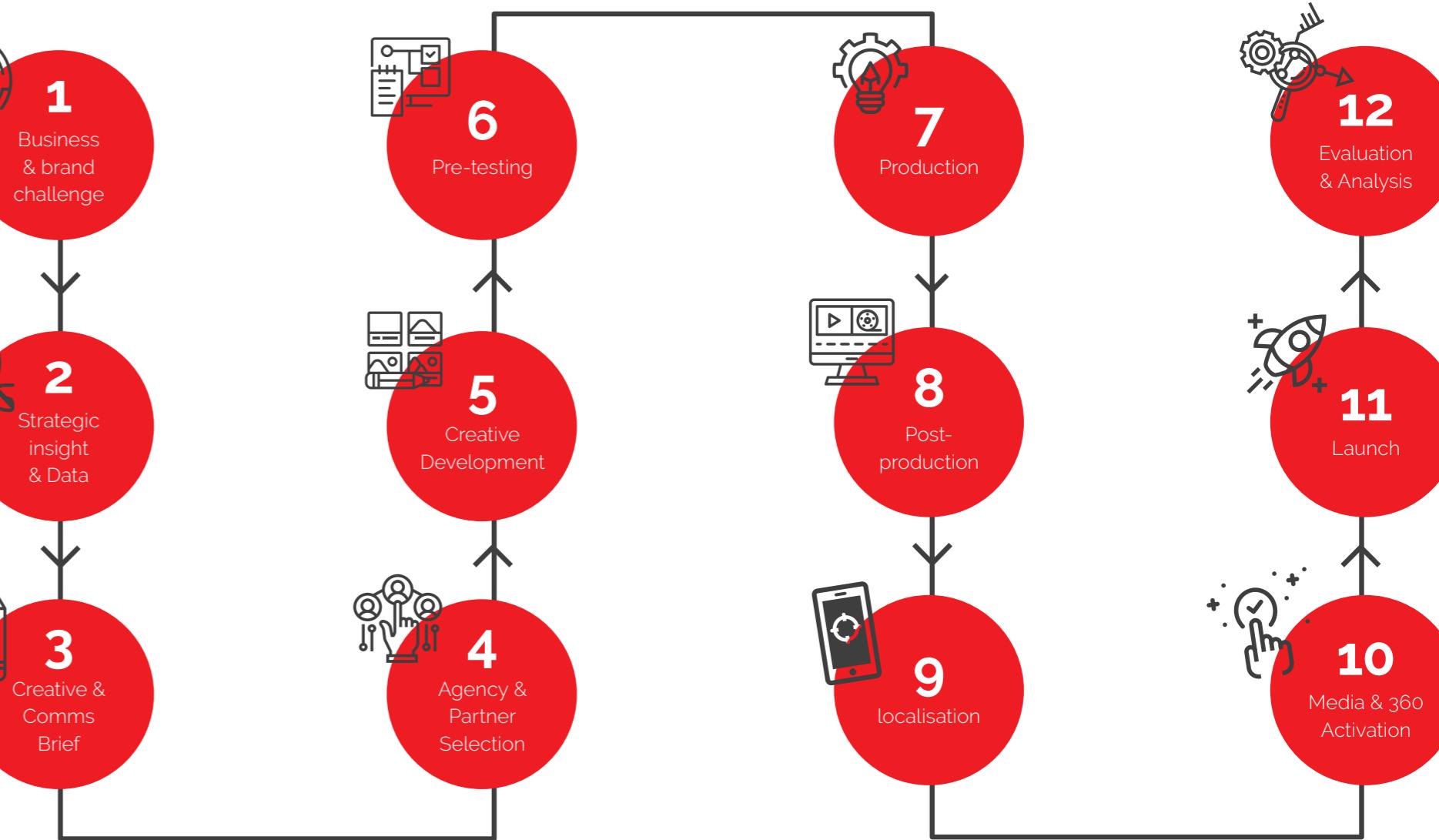
inspired by



# How Diverse and Inclusive is your company, brand or agency? Do the test.

The following exercise can give you an insight into where the company you are working for is on the road to inclusivity. Answer the following questions with yes or no. Each time you answer 'yes', you get one point.

- Q1** Are you interested in becoming a more inclusive company?
- Q2** Do you understand the importance of diversity and inclusion?
- Q3** Is your workforce made up of a diverse group of people?
- Q4** Do you understand the difference between diversity and inclusion?
- Q5** Do you know how to attract a diverse workforce and audience?
- Q6** Does your motivation for working on D&I extend beyond profit?
- Q7** Do you believe that people's diverse backgrounds, experiences and ideas can be valuable assets?
- Q8** Has your company taken simple steps toward inclusion such as 1) actively hiring people with diverse backgrounds, or 2) adding pronouns to everyone's email signature?
- Q9** Is your stance on D&I reflected both internally and externally in your brand?
- Q10** Are there specific people at your brand working on the implementation of D&I strategies?
- Q11** Are there specific structures in place that increase D&I efforts?
- Q12** Is every person working at your company aware of the importance of D&I and actively working towards more inclusion
- Q13** Are your D&I action plans focused on long term rather than short term solutions?
- Q14** Are your company physical and digital facilities accessible to all? (e.g. there are ramps at every staircase, video content includes subtitles, digital images have alt text...)
- Q15** Does your company actively look for new developments regarding D&I and partnerships with people and organizations in this field?



Now compare your points with the five categories on the second last page of this booklet. By knowing where your company stands when it comes to diversity and inclusion, you can find out what the next steps could be



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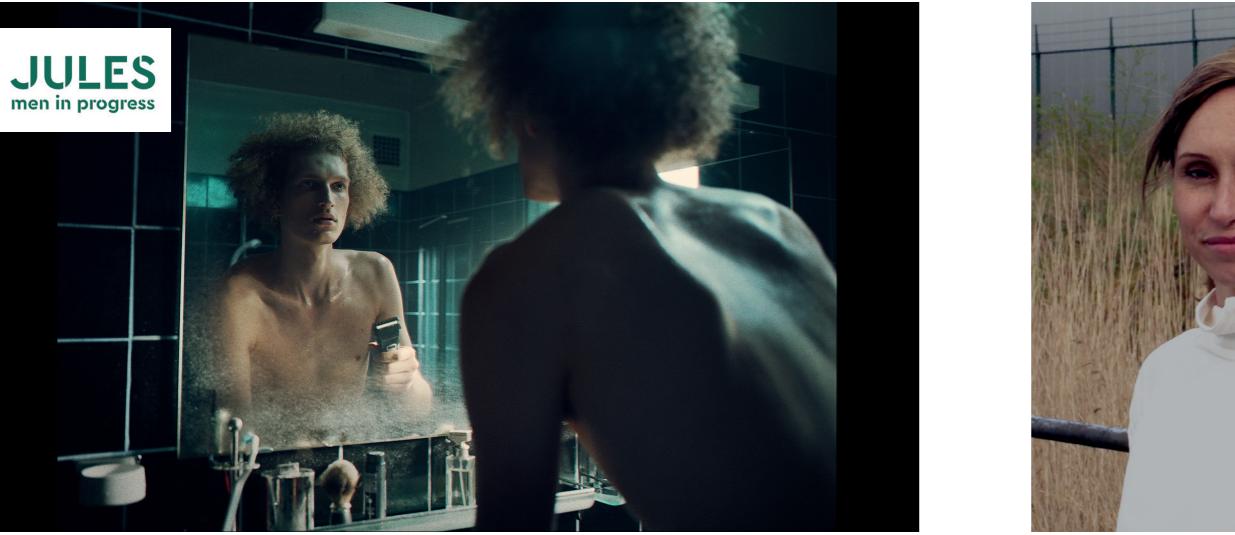
Business &amp; brand challenge

## What steps are you taking to make sure your brand is accessing all the diverse opportunities for growth?

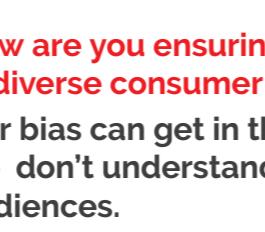
More progressive and inclusive brands perform better, and all brands can positively reflect and engage consumers.

### Some questions to ask yourself

Who is your audience? Who is excluded? Are they a potential business opportunity? Does your audience reflect the emerging consumer base for the category? Is there a deliberate diversity & sustainability opportunity for your brand? What's the next credible but authentic step forward your brand can take? Is your business willing stand up for what's right and truly reflect your consumers? Are senior stakeholders bought in?



*Jules' ambition is to create a movement of men who are aware, positive, sensitive and ready to bring about change, including when it comes to their masculinity. All this can be summed up in 3 words in a new brand signature: "Men In Progress"*



## How are you ensuring your strategy is grounded in diverse consumer insight?

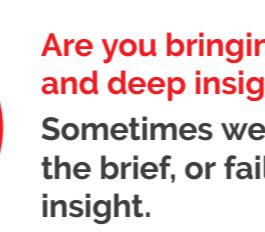
Our bias can get in the way and sometimes we don't understand the nuances of diverse audiences.

### Some questions to ask yourself

Is there any bias in research used to gather insight? Does it capture representative perspectives or just broad generalisations? How are consumer 'pen portraits' or mood boards depicted/visualized? Have you managed to capture nuance & avoid generalization? What are the perceptions of your brand within representative targets? What do you know about the cultural tensions and audience in each active market? Are stereotyping concerns tested with the affected group? Have you engaged experts who can help advise on how specific audiences might positively or negatively interpret your intentions?



*'Let's run fearless', with this powerfull statement Garmin is empowering women who don't feel safe running outdoor alone. Starting from this insights, they launched the 'Combat Warm-Up': three warming up exercises where you prepare for your run, as well as learning some self-defense techniques.*



## Are you bringing representative inspiration and deep insight to the brief?

Sometimes we bring our own stereotypes to the brief, or fail to inspire with our intent or our insight.

### Some questions to ask yourself

When working on a campaign that is centered around a specific issue and/or group of people What stereotypes, biases and/or prejudices does this issue/group deal with on a daily basis? How might we counter these with this campaign? Are your insights based on knowledge or thoughts that are supported by this group of people? How or who could this campaign (un)consciously exclude or ridicule? Have you researched different perspectives and views about the topic? What are some values of the brand that can be original assets to this campaign? How does your target audience relate to the campaign's topic? In what ways can diversity and inclusion elevate the story you want to tell? Is there a way in which you can gather and incorporate real stories?



## What steps are you taking with your suppliers to bring in more diverse talent?

Diverse teams bring new perspectives and make better work, but our industry is simply not diverse enough

### Some questions to ask yourself

Do you have a procurement diversity approach and a supply chain of diverse partners? Have you asked partners for evidence of representation across their overall output? Could a minority owned, or focused, partner augment the work of your AOR? Are you working together with your agency on this journey? Is there more you could be doing to support them to become more representative and diverse?



*Many advertisers today are actively addressing diversity in their communications. They are looking for communication agencies that can develop non-stereotypical campaigns. PitchPoint therefore includes diversity as one of the important criteria in the selection process.*



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Creative Development

## Are you keeping diversity top of mind at all stages of the creative process?

Stereotypes are too often used in our work, and even with good intent we still sometimes don't get it right.

### Some questions to ask yourself

How are you applying the Unstereotype Alliance's 3Ps?

- Presence is all about who is featured in the communication;
- Perspective is about who is framing the story;
- Personality is all about the depth of the character.

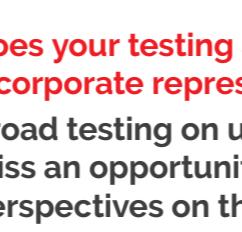
Where could diversity help originate powerful storytelling?

How diverse is the creative team and their inputs? Do they understand how different communities like to be represented?

How will diversity be reflected in different ad formats/lengths?



Partenamut believes that being united makes their mutuality unique. By presenting all types of members they reflect on their value that everyone deserves the same care.



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Pre-testing

## Does your testing and learning plan incorporate representative audiences?

Broad testing on universal demographics can miss an opportunity to understand diverse perspectives on the work.

### Some questions to ask yourself

Does pre-testing include a check of bias or stereotyping?

Are stereotyping issues researched amongst the affected group? As well as with experts who understand how those groups are likely to react?

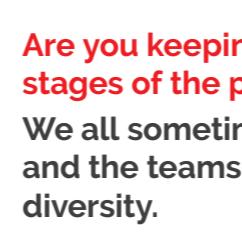
What influence could the storyboard have, does this prompt any areas of concern or opportunity?

Have you leveraged input from your own businesses' ERG groups or diversity council?

Have you created a safe space for frank and honest critique of the creative and interpretations?



Douwe Egberts's Something To Share breaks the stereotypes by showing two young girls introducing their relationship to their parent.



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Production

## Are you keeping diversity top of mind at all stages of the production process?

We all sometimes fail to deliver on our intent and the teams making the work often lack diversity.

### Some questions to ask yourself

What is the casting brief? Have you allowed enough time for an inclusive casting process? Could an under-represented group play a greater role?

Have you considered whether props or wardrobe choices reinforce stereotypes?

What is the diversity of the full production crew?

Is the shoot an open, inclusive & unbiased environment, with safe spaces and accessible facilities (e.g. wheelchair access or gender-neutral bathrooms)?

Will there be a triple bid tender including female/other under-represented directors?



Etre gentil, c'est la BASE. With this baseline BASE focuses on the helping each other in life is something everyone does. Going from strangers with different ethnical background helping each other to two colleagues with different roots sharing their lunch.



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Post-production

## Are you checking back to ensure the edit delivers on our vision?

Post-production can change the final impression of the work positively and negatively.

### Some questions to ask yourself

Is there diversity in the post-production team?

What is the casting for any voice-overs, are you avoiding stereotypes there?

Have you considered colloquial nuances of accents?

Are there opportunities to make assets more accessible? (e.g. CCs, audio descriptions)

Have you ensured the approval processes account for bias?

Have you double checked that the final edit delivers on your diversity ambition (in all cut-downs)?



The campaign Dare To Sponsor for the Special Olympics uses the Special Olympic athletes throughout their production process. Acting in the commercial, modelling on the visual & even the voice-overs are all performed by the Special Olympians.



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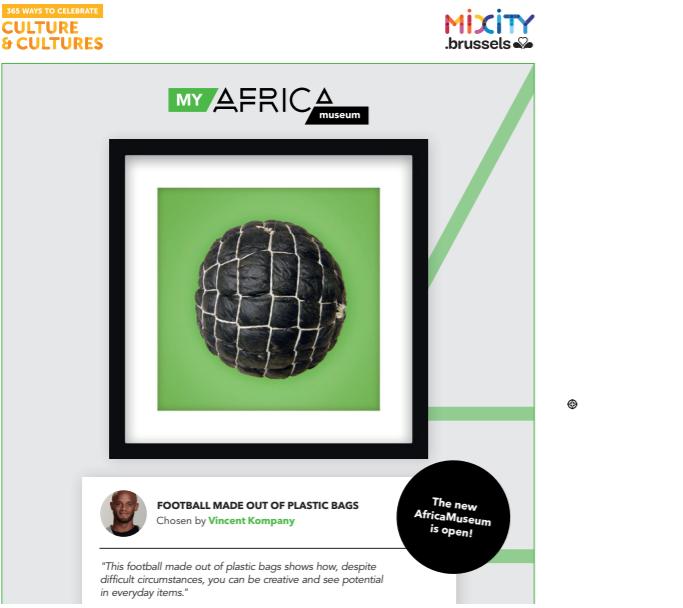
localisation

**Are you considering local nuances and ensuring that both global and local impacts of decisions are considered?**

Sometimes when copy is localized it can either be inappropriate for that market or adapted to be less progressive.

#### Some questions to ask yourself

Are there any local cultural nuances which could make your content inappropriate?  
For the adaptation of existing asset does the casting truly reflect local diversity?  
If replacing diverse casting are you changing it to be more representative, or the opposite?  
What data can you access to support a more progressive agenda?  
If you are using an older copy, is the content still appropriate? Has the global or local context changed?



In Brussels the Africa Museum opened their doors, and to promote the museum a collection of famous Belgians (some with Congolese background) chose their favourite objects. Knowing that Belgium has a special bond with Africa (and especially Congo) the campaign focuses on local values.



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Media &amp; 360 Activation

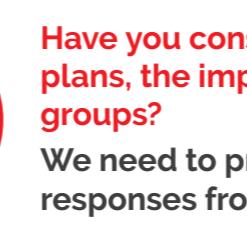
**Have you reviewed your media plans to ensure they are progressive and appropriate?**  
Where you place your content, and what it funds, is as important as the content itself.

#### Some questions to ask yourself

Are your media plans safe from funding inflammatory content, hate speech or disinformation?  
Are there any channels that would be inappropriate to be present on?  
Could your marketing mix, data usage or brand safety settings exclude certain groups?  
Have you considered actively including or partnering with diversity-focused media partners?  
Could you even create new content together?  
Are there unexpected touchpoints relevant to new groups?

#### Some questions to ask yourself

What is the monitoring / response plan for any feedback on representation? Are your social media teams briefed?  
Are you prepared on how to respond to any hateful comments you receive?  
Are you ready to respond if the communities you are trying to positively represent raise questions?  
Have you prepared responses to best/worst possible outcomes?  
What are your internal launch plans, have you engaged your ERGs?



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Launch

**Have you considered, as part of your launch plans, the impact amongst different diverse groups?**  
We need to prepare for positive and negative responses from consumers and colleagues.

#### Some questions to ask yourself

What was the commercial upside? How are you tracking the impact on your brand?  
Does your measurement approach represent diversity? What is the diversity across the portfolio & creative output?  
Are you making progress in positive representation? What capability gaps still exist?  
Can you make a positive case study to inspire & engage internally or externally?  
Have you truly understood and learnt from the actual response to your work, whether positive or negative?



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Evaluation &amp; Analysis

**How are you building your body of knowledge, effectiveness and insight?**  
We are all just starting this journey and need to create a learning culture.

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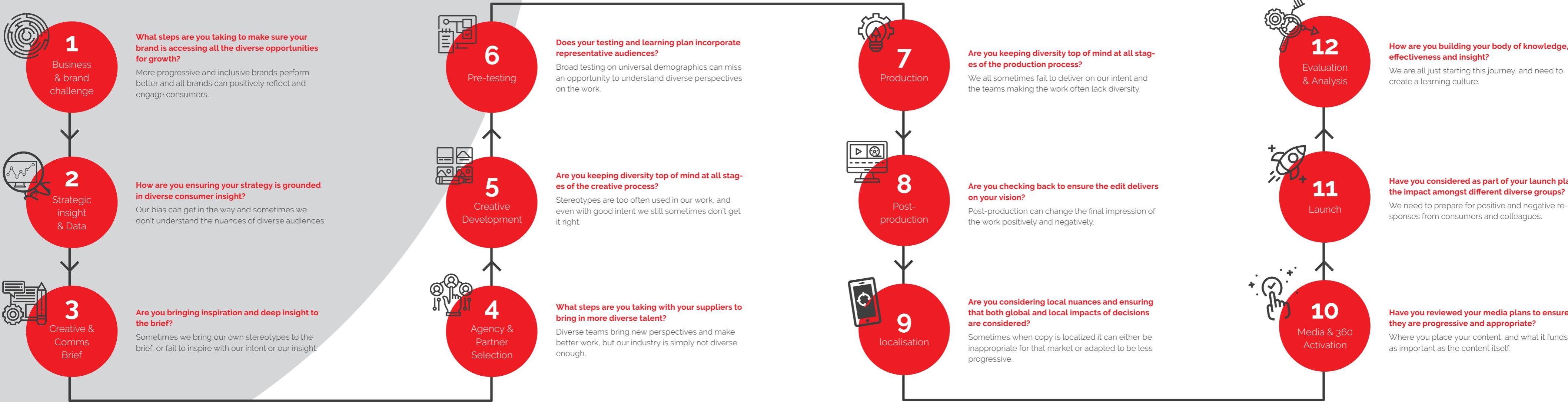
During the Football European Championships 2021 Hungary prosecuted a controversial law against LGBTQ marriage, visit.brussels used this moment to unite the world against homophobic gestures by giving country flags the famous 'rainbow' pattern, symbolizing the LGBTQ community. Many countries loved the idea and shared their new national colours, but some people found it disrespectful towards the heritage of their country colours.



jbc launched a gender-neutral clothing line for kids, encouraging them to be who they want to be. From that moment on, JBC's brand image changed to an inclusive and progressive brand, which influenced their sales and brand reputation positively.

# The Diverse Creative Process on a Page

This guide has tried to offer many questions and solutions right across the creative process, and whilst we think that depth is important, we know it can be overwhelming. Here on one page are the key topics and questions to be asking. Pick a couple to start focussing on today and take it from there.



# Results Diversity & Inclusion Test

<b>1-2 / 15</b> =	<b>3-5 / 15</b> =	<b>6-8 / 15</b> =	<b>9-11 / 15</b> =	<b>12-15 / 15</b> =
<b>Diversity defensive</b>	<b>Diversity blind</b>	<b>Inclusion enthusiasts</b>	<b>Inclusion lovers</b>	<b>Inclusive companies</b>

Companies that are aware they are not very diverse and/or inclusive, but who do not know what they can do about it. These brands might have a rather homogenous workforce and say things like "we never get diverse candidates for our vacancies" or "we have a person of colour working in our IT department".

Companies that are aware there is a lot of diversity, but who choose to focus solely on the similarities between people. Even though this is important to do, this way they ignore the impact of diversity. These companies say things like "we do not see colour".

Companies that are aware they have to put in some effort in order to reach more diversity and be more inclusive. These efforts do not happen in a structured way, causing 'gaps' in their approach. They might say things like "we add pronouns to our e-mail" without checking these in other settings.

Companies that are putting in the effort and do so in a structured way. They took a long and hard look at themselves, pinpointed the aspects they need to improve and they are going for it. They are only a few steps away from becoming an inclusive (and loveable) company or brand.

Companies that have a sustainable and successful approach towards inclusion, that keep on improving themselves on a daily basis. If you are in this category, we can probably learn something from you.

# Acknowledgements

## AIR Brussels

(Cases p4-5, p12-13)

## Bonka Circus

(Case p. 20-21)

## Pitchpoint

(Case p. 10-11)

## Allyens

(Introduction, Test, Case p.8-9)

## FamousGrey

(Cases p. 6-7, p.22-23, p.24-25)

## TBWA/Kantar

(Case p. 16-17)

## BBDO/Kantar

(Case p. 14-15)

## LDV United

(Cases p. 18-19, p. 26-27)

## Credits

The Diversity & Inclusion paper is an initiative of the WFA, and was adapted for the Belgian market by ACC, UBA and UMA.

## About ACC

The purpose of the Association of Communication Companies is to unite all communication agencies in their individual interests and their collective ambitions. Their mission is to upgrade, promote and defend the added value of our members towards (future) employees, clients, authorities, press and public.

[www.acc.be](http://www.acc.be)

## About UBA:

United Brands Association is the Belgian advertisers' association made by and for brands. Our mission is to enable a creative, innovative and transparent communication eco-system as a source of strong and sustainable brands. We represent advertisers' interests, enable brand building expertise, inspire innovation and connect brand builders. The UBA community counts 353 companies, representing 1050 brands and 7200 brand builders.

[www.ubabelgium.be](http://www.ubabelgium.be)

## About UMA:

The UMA (United Media Agencies) promotes media agencies' expertise, added value and diversity of the services proposed to a wide audience within the communication sector, such as advertisers, media partners, authorities and the general public.

[www.uma.be](http://www.uma.be)

