

# Inclusive Multicultural Marketing Toolkit



# Acknowledgements

This guide represents the collective knowledge, expertise, passion, and commitment of subject matter experts from the diverse communities and cultures Energy Trust of Oregon serves. We acknowledge and thank this team for their contributions.

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# Purpose Statement:

## A Note from Energy Trust of Oregon

This project started with one simple idea: We could be doing more—more to ensure our marketing and communications include and respectfully represent our customers, more to resonate with the culturally rich and complex individuals and communities we serve, and more to elevate and celebrate their contributions to our mission.

We assembled a panel of experts in multicultural marketing with the goal of co-creating a guide rich in practical insights, checklists, and foundational questions to not only help expand the reach of our campaigns, but also serve as a resource to any organization or brand working on multicultural marketing initiatives. As we engaged this remarkable and diverse group, it became clear that operationalizing their ideas and insights required more than a “how-to” document for marketing staff and creative teams working on culturally specific campaigns. It called for a foundational shift in how we think about integrated marketing and communications.

We will avoid treating multicultural marketing as an add-on to what we do and evolve to be more inclusive in how we think about individuals and communities, considering the many identities of our customers and how they intersect. And we will implement best practices for inclusive multicultural marketing across all stages of campaign planning, from how we make financial investments, to how we define and measure the success of our campaigns, to how we develop and execute strategies and creative concepts.

We will ask ourselves, “*Who* are we, *who* are we trying to reach, *what* is it we are offering them that they should pay attention to and embrace, and *why* are we doing it?” We will be honest and transparent about what’s in it for us and what’s in it for them. How are we going to make a difference in their lives and support their needs? How will we make sure we are being truly inclusive for the long run and not just checking the box today?

This guide offers a step toward redefining and setting a new standard for marketing at Energy Trust of Oregon—or any organization seeking a more diverse, equitable and inclusive approach to marketing. We will not be perfect, and we will make missteps along the way, but we will learn and evolve. We will work to do better, to be more consistent, to be more thoughtful and to hold ourselves—and the consultants and vendors with whom we work—accountable.

# Introduction: Brief Overview of DEI and Multicultural Marketing

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and multicultural marketing are connected, **but not interchangeable**. Multicultural marketing strategies may not be successful if developed without understanding and applying DEI principles. And a company or organization needs a good multicultural marketing strategy to effectively publicize its products and services.

This guide focuses on multicultural marketing to help professionals in this field reach and resonate with diverse audiences; however, it is still important to understand both concepts and how they relate to one another. Each serves a unique purpose and a specific audience. And a commitment to one should not come at the expense of the other.

**Organizational DEI is an internal practice** that seeks to embrace and support diversity of representation and thought, to include every voice, and to provide equitable opportunities for all stakeholders—whether these are employees, partners, suppliers, retailers or customers. DEI recognizes differences among people that may include race, geography, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and ability, among other things, as well as how these characteristics intersect. DEI initiatives strive to create an environment where everyone feels not only represented and heard but also provided with fair opportunities to succeed. Embracing these values in the workplace is imperative not as a response to current events, business trends or societal pressures, but because it is the right thing to do.

Conversely, **multicultural marketing is an external effort** to engage or sell products or services to audiences of multiple ethnicities or cultural backgrounds in a relevant and authentic way, and honor cultural differences, including differences in perspectives, motives, and beliefs among people of diverse backgrounds.

To demonstrate a true commitment to building relationships with stakeholders and community members throughout a lifetime, and not just a temporary response to address a problem, both DEI and multicultural marketing efforts must be ongoing. This is what will move our efforts from transactional to transformational. Likewise, the work we do today as communicators and marketers should continue to evolve as we work toward improving how we serve diverse communities.

So, how do we, as marketers, bring DEI into our multicultural marketing strategies and campaigns in tangible ways?

We worked toward answering this question and identifying universal best practices for weaving DEI into our work through a series of three workshops sponsored and facilitated by Energy Trust. The workshop participants, who are the co-creators of this guide, included a panel of independent multicultural marketing subject matter experts (SMEs) representing diverse communities, geographies, and ethnicities, as well as Energy Trust marketing staff. The guide's co-creators first defined DEI within the specific context of multicultural marketing and then mapped out inclusive best practices in three core areas of marketing and communications: (1) The role of audience research in multicultural marketing; (2) Planning and strategy considerations; and (3) Creative considerations. While the principles presented here were discussed in the context of working with multicultural communities in the state of Oregon, the recommended best practices apply to all multicultural campaigns, regardless of geography, goal or objectives.

# Defining Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Multicultural Marketing

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in multicultural marketing is defined by applying core DEI values to our marketing strategies to ensure we reach diverse audiences effectively and respectfully. DEI values must be built into the ethos of an organization, starting with its leadership, to be successfully adopted by other teams and stakeholders.

Here is a closer look at what diversity, equity and inclusion mean in the context of multicultural marketing.

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## DIVERSITY = REPRESENTATION

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**Diversity** in multicultural marketing means acknowledging, respecting and honoring all the complexities of a given market through the unbiased representation of its diverse community members.

### ASK YOURSELF:

Will all people in my community feel represented in this campaign? What am I doing to ensure my marketing efforts and the people behind them are representative of the communities and the demographics I want to serve? Does my content reflect everyone it is trying to reach? Am I avoiding stereotypes and considering the nuances and complexities that characterize my target audience?

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## EQUITY = FAIR ACCESS

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**Equity** in multicultural marketing means investing in resources that ensure fair access across all communities and affinity groups.

### ASK YOURSELF:

Am I providing access to a level playing field regardless of language spoken, affinity, ability, or cultural background, so that everyone has the same level of access to the information I am trying to share? Is my investment in marketing to this community equitable compared to other groups? Do my tactics and communication channels align with how my target audiences think, act and communicate without defaulting to my own comfort zone? Am I creating space for representatives from within the community to guide decision making?



## INCLUSION = BELONGING

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**Inclusion** in multicultural marketing means assuring the voices and desires of diverse community members are heard, valued and acted upon when designing marketing campaigns and materials.

### ASK YOURSELF:

Is my campaign creating a sense of belonging, allowing my intended audience to feel seen and understood? Am I assuring that my creative assets reflect the diverse voices in a community by involving community members in the design and development process? Am I looking beyond the basic demographics to get to the heart of what my intended audiences need? Am I being inclusive of all forms of diversity, (e.g., race, ethnicity, age, geographical location, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, affinity, and ability among others) as well as how they intersect within different audiences?

### BEST PRACTICES FOR INCORPORATING DEI INTO MULTICULTURAL MARKETING EFFORTS

- **Be ready to invest equitably**—To truly level the playing field, organizations must commit to allocating the necessary resources to ensure that every audience that needs to hear your message has access to it through your marketing efforts. This level of commitment needs to come from the top, from the decision-makers who call for inclusive hiring practices to those writing long-term strategic plans and allocating budgets. To be truly equitable and inclusive, be purposeful and intentional in allocating funds in long-lasting programs and partnerships. While this best practice is not exclusive to marketing, it is important to call out because a marketing team's ability to integrate DEI into its approach relies on a broader, organizational commitment to DEI.
- **Start by defining the target audience**—Identify the characteristics of the people you are trying to reach. Establish a very clear vision of who they are, how they want to be identified, what challenges they face, and what matters most to them. Be as specific as possible when referring to your audience—for instance don't use "communities of color" as a singular group if your target audience is actually "Latino homeowners in the Willamette valley" or "Black-owned businesses in the Portland metro area." Look beyond simple demographic characteristics of different cultures, geographies and affinity groups to the multiplicity of identities within them. Consider that the population is constantly changing and evolving as people move to an area, including immigrant and refugee groups from different countries of origin.
- **Set specific, measurable campaign goals and metrics**—Setting specific, measurable goals helps track progress and keeps you accountable. However, you can't rely exclusively on numbers and statistics; you must balance them with an honest, qualitative assessment of the relationships you are building with the community. Likewise, success may look different for multicultural campaigns because you might be using new channels or investing in different resources. Your metrics for success should be defined by the cultural insights gained and how they inform your campaigns.

- **Be respectful and don't make assumptions**—When it comes to marketing, one size doesn't fit all. Don't assume all diverse communities are driven by the same motivators. Start by understanding that there are complexities and differences within each community. For instance, when talking about the Latino community, understand that not all Latinos speak Spanish. There are bilingual Latinos, monolingual Spanish speakers, monolingual English speakers, and people who speak indigenous languages like Mixteco and Mam (Mayan language). There are also different age groups, generations, socioeconomic levels and affinity groups.
- **Be authentic**—Make every effort to find trusted messengers and community voices to participate in campaigns, both as intended recipients and as advisors throughout the strategic planning and creative process. The makeup of a given community should also be represented in the internal and/or external teams working on the campaigns.

## The Role of Audience Research in Inclusive Multicultural Marketing

Research is critical to representing communities as they see themselves and to avoid treating them as monoliths or reinforcing stereotypes. When scoping campaigns, allocate budget and allow time for research. Communities are not homogeneous. There is diversity within diversity, and marketing efforts must strive to honor the complexity of those communities. For example, we have established that not all Latinos speak Spanish. Our marketing strategies need to consider how to get a message across in a way that resonates with all Latinos and the needs of their community. That is where research comes into play.

Being equitable in our marketing efforts requires a deeper understanding of the barriers people in a community might be facing. A deeper understanding of barriers can help us discover solutions to help break them down and provide access to our messaging. This deeper understanding comes from talking to community members and exploring their realities and culture.

Research methods used to inform multicultural marketing efforts may include but are not limited to:

- **Stakeholder Interviews**—Meeting one-on-one (in-person or via phone or video) with members of the community using a discussion guide to understand their perceptions, challenges and motivators around a specific topic.
- **Focus Groups/Triads**—Guided discussions facilitated by a moderator to get feedback from a diverse group of people on varied topics, products or ideas. Focus groups are best when held in person with no more than 6 to 10 participants. Triads are a good option for virtual meetings since having a group of three participants allows them to have a deeper discussion and engage with one another.
- **Community-Based Organization (CBO) Engagement**—CBOs are uniquely positioned to provide valuable insights and access to the communities they serve. Engaging with them early on can help facilitate access to community members for paid research opportunities.



## BEST PRACTICES FOR INCORPORATING RESEARCH INTO INCLUSIVE MULTICULTURAL MARKETING

Research findings should inform decisions about who to represent in a campaign's photos or videos, what languages to use, and what channels to use to ensure initiatives and campaigns genuinely reflect everyone in the intended audience. Here are some best practices for conducting that research:

- **Narrow it down**—Rather than being too ambitious in defining who a campaign will reach, start by narrowing down the breadth of the desired outcomes with a focused scope of work. This will have a higher degree of potential impact than trying to cover too much at once.
- **Start with demographics, then go deeper**—Make sure to review demographic information for the specific region or area that your campaign will focus on to identify the different communities that live there and understand their characteristics. Looking at the Census numbers to understand the demographics of a community within a designated region, city or area is a natural place to start. Be as specific as possible when you review the data to account for differences within certain regions, such as rural communities, which will have a very different cultural makeup and communication needs than urban centers. However, consider that historically, the Census hasn't fully accounted for marginalized communities. This is why gathering additional information about the composition of a given community through additional resources or primary research is important.
- **Budget for research**—Consider allocating funds to conduct quantitative and/or qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of a community's perceived notions about a certain topic or product, what motivates them to act, and what existing communication barriers they may face, including preferred means of communication and trusted channels. Don't assume that because you are working with a multicultural subject matter expert from a specific community (e.g., Hispanic/Latino, African American/Black, Asian American, Indigenous/Native American, rural geographies, etc.), they know everything there is to know about that community—that's tokenism. Demographics are constantly changing and so are the complexities that different communities face. Each new project requires a certain degree of understanding of the specific characteristics and behaviors of the target community to avoid falling into stereotypes or oversimplifying the community dynamics.
- **Procure a diverse sample**—When working with focus groups and other forms of research that involve surveying people, the way you select people to participate in the study needs to be equitable. Not doing so could result in a biased demographic sample whose opinions might not reflect the full spectrum of the audiences you are trying to reach. Recruit people from diverse backgrounds who represent the experiences of the intended community and who can help you understand how they have been misrepresented or stereotyped in the past.
- **Create a respectful and comforting environment**—Approach participants with empathy and respect so they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Avoid meeting in environments that feel too "official" or institutional and, whenever possible, facilitate sessions in their own environment (e.g., community churches, group events, etc.).
- **Prepare an inclusive discussion guide**—Discussion guides should be informed by the community's experience to assure participants feel comfortable sharing and that the captured data represents their needs and perceptions. Choose everyday language that elicits candid and honest feedback. Also, facilitate conversations in the participants' preferred language.

- **Consider what you are offering**—For research to be effective, it needs to be easy for people to participate, it needs to be exciting for the participants, and they need to feel there is something they are contributing to by participating. Is there a problem they are helping solve in their community? What is the expected outcome? How will this benefit them? How will they be compensated for their time? Failing to offer adequate monetary compensation could dramatically impact the demographic sample composition based exclusively on socioeconomic status. All this should be part of the research strategy considerations.
- **Test creative concepts for relevance**—Even if your multicultural marketing strategy is informed by market research, testing creative concepts through focus groups or other facilitated discussions with members of the community for which the campaign is intended is a best practice. This will help you see which ideas resonate the most and assure there are no cultural red flags which could render the whole effort counterproductive.
- **Build strategic relationships**—Identify organizations, professional associations and business groups that have established themselves as trusted messengers among the audiences you are trying to reach. Have preliminary conversations to gain a better understanding of the people they serve. In some communities, such as the African American/Black community, these might be faith-based organizations. In other cases, it might be an association of multicultural business owners. Regardless, remember that many of those organizations tend to be short-staffed and have limited financial resources, so make sure to consider what you are asking them to provide and compensate them for their time.
- **Don't forget to evaluate**—When doing research, consider how your campaign will be evaluated and how you will request feedback after it launches to assess its effectiveness based on established metrics. Feedback can point out any communities and/or voices that might have been left out. Over time, this process can create access to a whole new market and demographic that perhaps did not feel included in your marketing efforts before. Research then becomes part of an ongoing process to be more inclusive in your marketing efforts and can help strengthen brand loyalty.
- **Think beyond the now**—Develop and invest in a long-term plan to follow up with research participants. This demonstrates a commitment to the communities involved and strengthens the relationship with them by helping build trust. Research should be ongoing to provide a real return on investment. Success metrics might need to be redefined to reflect progress as you establish trust within a community. Consistent, meaningful relationships take continued work.

## Planning and Strategy Considerations for Inclusive Multicultural Marketing Campaigns

We are at a cultural tipping point. What used to work doesn't necessarily work anymore. At the root of all our marketing efforts and best intentions, we need some radical thinking and a deep understanding of what we stand for and what we offer to the communities we want to reach before we can get started with campaign planning and execution.

When talking about planning and strategy considerations for developing inclusive multicultural marketing campaigns, also consider and commit to organizational DEI values. Strive for diverse representation

among marketing team leads, strategy leads and those with budgetary authority—or at the very least, involve people with experience working with multicultural communities who can make informed decisions on how to engage with them. Unless there is buy-in at the leadership level, no multicultural marketing effort will be able to achieve truly inclusive goals.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR SETTING OBJECTIVES FOR INCLUSIVE MULTICULTURAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

- **Be specific and understand the why**—Have a very clear idea of what communities you intend to serve or who you are trying to reach, how they identify themselves, and how they want to be addressed. There should also be an established understanding of why your organization wants to reach a particular group, community or demographic. Knowing this helps uncover their motivations and how to engage with them better while making sure you are not just checking a box.
- **Involve a diverse team**—Ideally, the team working on multicultural marketing strategies internally should incorporate diverse voices, too, not just the third-party subject matter experts you enlist to develop a campaign or project. When that type of expertise is not available internally, consider partnering with a community, professional or business organization serving those communities to bring their diversity lens and experience into the strategic planning phase of a new marketing initiative.
- **Invite diverse voices to early planning stages**—Whenever possible, involve multicultural contractors, internal team members and community members in the early planning stages of a new project. To set goals that effectively reflect multicultural communities, initial conversations should involve people who understand the nuances of diverse, multicultural communities.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR BUILDING THE RIGHT TEAM

- **Get buy-in from leadership**—DEI values should be embedded in the fabric of the organization, making sure that everyone in the team knows that leadership is involved in some way. While they might not be managing all the details of a new campaign from start to finish, campaigns must align with the mission, vision, values and DEI goals and objectives of the organization.
- **Seek representation from within**—Consider inviting people from within the organization, such as employee resource groups, who represent the audiences you are trying to reach. However, be careful not to tokenize staff.
- **Involve and establish relationships with external subject matter experts (SMEs)**—Involving multicultural contractors, consultants and firms as part of your team is key to the success of your multicultural marketing campaigns. Honor their expertise without assuming one individual can do all the work on their own—SMEs still need a team to collaborate with. It is also important to build meaningful relationships with those individuals and organizations. This may mean establishing longer-term contracts and scopes that allow time to build successful relationships.
- **Think outside the box**—Consider using non-traditional approaches to form creative teams. For example, you can work with multicultural micro-influencers as campaign creative leads to deepen community engagement, reach and resonate with audiences in new ways, and encourage multi-generational representation. This is also a good way to invest in a community through a creative approach.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHANNELS

- **Do the preliminary work**—Before deciding which media/communication channels are best for any given campaign, you must have a very good understanding of what the campaign is trying to accomplish, who you are trying to reach, and why. Also, be open to the possibility that in some cases, media might not be the best or only channel to reach the desired audience.
- **Treat each campaign as a new project**—What worked in the past might not work this time around. Marketing entails more than advertising. Look beyond media campaigns and remember that community engagement, grassroots marketing and outreach strategies can be more effective to reach some multicultural audiences.
- **Take an integrated approach**—You don't need to silo or substitute one channel for another. A media campaign may complement or bolster other community engagement activities, such as outreach to community-based organizations and other organizations like churches, professional groups and/or small business associations that are independent and have a considerable influence within their communities. Having more diversified, integrated and robust strategies will only strengthen your campaigns.
- **Involve community organizations**—Many multicultural community members rely on community organizations and church leaders with deep community roots for support and information. Cultivate those relationships or partner with someone who knows how to navigate their way effectively through those alternate channels. Even when running a campaign on different media channels, that message can be made available to CBOs and faith-based organizations, so you have an opportunity to extend the campaign's reach in a unified way. Don't forget that most of these entities already provide a wealth of resources for their community members.
- **Don't generalize within a given culture**—Understand that there are many diverse subcultures embedded within a larger culture, so there is no simple way to identify the best channel for a campaign. Channel strategies are complex and must be intentional and rooted in customer insights. Working with one culture might require using different channels to reach each of its subcultures effectively. Tracking cultural trends within each ethnic subgroup—perhaps through trusted messengers and/or CBOs—can help you choose additional channels you had not considered before.
- **Consider community-specific challenges**—Social media and email may not be a good channel to reach many underserved communities that don't have reliable Internet access. Literacy is a real issue among different communities. Not everybody will be able to read an ad, or a story published in a newspaper. Likewise, some dialects rely on oral communication more than the written word, making video a more effective way to reach these communities.

## Creative Considerations for Developing Inclusive Marketing Campaigns

Creative is often how we experience a campaign in tangible ways, so it is extremely important that designers, writers, photographers, videographers or other individuals responsible for bringing creative concepts to life begin their work by asking the right questions. Failing to do this will negatively impact the strategic decision-making needed for creative ideation, planning and execution.

There are three key elements that need to be considered as part of the creative development process for inclusive marketing campaigns:

- **Ensuring representation**—Having representation on your creative teams is a fundamental element of developing inclusive marketing campaigns, as well as empowering those teams to make inclusive—and bold—creative choices throughout the strategic planning and development processes.
- **Understanding your audience**—To craft campaign messaging that will truly resonate and serve a purpose, start with your intended audience and an understanding of their characteristics, insights, needs, challenges and preferences.
- **Knowing your role**—Strive to obtain a clear idea of how your message resonates with the communities you want to reach and how you bring value to them beyond inclusion based on their specific needs and desires. Understanding your positioning and why those communities should care about your message will help you build trust and be more effective in designing successful campaigns.

## BEST PRACTICES REGARDING LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Get clarity on your desired audience**—Really pinpoint who you are trying to talk to and apply their cultural and/or language cues to your campaigns.
- **Consider the medium**—Each medium suggests a different way to use the language, whether using radio, TV, texting or social media. Craft your messaging in an appropriate way for each medium and how your audiences use them.
- **Have a language-specific style guide**—The terminology used in languages must resonate with the community members receiving that message. Develop language-specific glossaries and style guides that consistently get updated, ideally in collaboration with contractors who are part of those communities.
- **Differentiate languages and dialects**—Diverse communities may use an array of languages and dialects. Marketers must closely examine language usage and preference to effectively reach these audiences. In Oregon, this comes up most frequently when working with Hispanic/Latino audiences, who aren't all Spanish-speaking. Some use indigenous dialects; others use Spanglish (a hybrid between English and Spanish); and there are many households that predominantly speak English, with Spanish used as a heritage language. By identifying who you are talking to, you can decide the best approach to take—and this means you might not need to use Spanish every time or that what you really need is a bilingual (English/Spanish) campaign. These same nuances exist in other communities as well, particularly those that include people from multiple countries of origin.
- **Use relatable language**—Language needs to be non-technical and at a level that target audiences can easily digest. Avoid technical jargon and focus on using clear, concise language. This can be especially important when working in languages other than English. Discuss with your team how to simplify language so it is relatable for audiences of any grade level within a community you are trying to reach and reflects the language used in other types of media they consume.
- **Don't just translate, transcreate**—Translation is what happens at the end of the campaign development process, whereas transcreation starts at the beginning of the planning process. Unless working with procedural or official language that requires being as literal as possible, the best approach when delivering existing content in other languages is to use “transcreation.” Also

understood as cultural translation, transcreation is the process of adapting all phases of campaign scoping, strategic planning, channel selection and creative development to a given audience and in their native language based on cultural considerations and nuances. Don't forget that some languages like Spanish tend to use more words to express simple ideas, which might impact creative considerations.

- **Be intentional with language**—Choose words carefully, avoiding language that could alienate others or reinforce or create stereotypes about the communities you are trying to reach.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR VISUALIZING DIVERSITY IN CREATIVE CAMPAIGNS

- **Establish clear brand guidelines**—Take the time to define clear brand guidelines on how to represent diversity in marketing campaigns, and ensure everyone involved in campaign development has access to these guidelines and understands how to apply them.
- **Start with the creative brief**—Documenting creative intent is one of the key steps in designing successful campaigns. Defining clear creative goals, including casting diverse talent and seeking narratives from the community, should be a central part of an inclusive marketing campaign brief. Discuss these goals with all team members to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- **Get real with imagery**—Include more images of what diverse people really look like as opposed to what mainstream culture says that beautiful or ethnically diverse people should look like. This applies to culturally specific campaigns as much as it does to cross-cultural campaigns. It is easy to fall into stereotypes when portraying any community and affinity group, but some of the most prevalent examples tend to be representations of Latino/Hispanic, Black, indigenous, Asian and other multicultural communities. Diversity of appearance exists within these communities. Ensure your campaigns accurately depict the communities you serve, including their subcultures.
- **Go to the source**—Whenever possible, allocate funds to shoot original photography using real people from the communities you want to represent. Also, work with multicultural creators, creative agencies or other creative vendors representative of, owned and operated by people from diverse backgrounds to source genuine footage and images. When a custom shoot isn't possible, consider reaching out to the artist to license their photos.
- **Pursue visual authenticity**—In this day and age, people can easily detect and react negatively to images that are over-produced and staged. Candidly captured footage and images offer a way to disrupt visual stereotypes and reflect how we see ourselves, rather than how others see us. Try rethinking the way you present things visually: Do you need to show everyone always smiling in your pictures? Do you always need to use professional studio lighting? Is Photoshopping your images a must? Just remember that when working with community members or real customers—as opposed to professional talent—it is critical to represent people as they see themselves rather than how you see them.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING NARRATIVES THAT REFLECT INCLUSIVITY

Assessing storylines for inclusivity extends to making sure the settings and characters featured in campaigns are inclusive. Below are some things to consider when thinking of narratives for inclusive marketing efforts.



- **Include diverse voices**—It takes someone with a diverse background to understand the nuances and intricacies of a given community, and to be able to write and produce storylines and content that reflect those specific realities in an authentic way.
- **Avoid convenient generalizations and seek authenticity**—Taking general market campaigns and simply translating them into a different language or adding ambiguously “ethnic” elements doesn’t work—nor does approaching narratives from a monolithic mindset. These things can even go so far as to alienate and offend audiences. There is diversity within communities, so your stories shouldn’t generalize or make assumptions about the lived experiences of individuals within them. Instead, strive to bring out and celebrate these complexities in the stories you tell.
- **Include cultural cues**—When thinking of settings for inclusive marketing campaigns, ask yourself questions like: Am I trying to reach renters or homeowners? Urban or rural communities? What do I know about the areas in which these communities live? Do I know their cultural make-up? How do I reflect all the complexities of the community I want to direct my message to? Then, look at the little things, the small details you can incorporate into the production to reflect the diversity of your target community without falling into stereotypes.
- **Rethink diversity-focused celebrations**—Diversity-focused narratives would be remiss without including special times of the year and specific celebrations relevant to different communities. However, there is a thin line between acknowledging “ethnic holidays” and misappropriating them from a marketing perspective. Rather than simply creating a calendar of commemorative moments such as Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, etc. to guide new content creation, ask yourself: How do Black people celebrate Black History Month? And how can I elevate those voices in a way that shows respect and honors them? Be consistent and show a commitment to support those communities on an ongoing basis, beyond one-off celebrations.
- **Consider creative sovereignty**—It is common to hear conversations about “visual sovereignty,” especially in the context of marketing to tribal or indigenous communities and cultures, but the concept applies more broadly to creative narratives as a whole and across cultures. Granting people and communities sovereignty reinforces authentic storytelling because it gives them control over their stories and how they are represented in media. It reflects who people are, rather than forcing them into somebody else’s narrative simply because it is convenient. Enable communities to tell their own stories and leverage their voices as much as possible—without forcing them into or imposing your version or interpretation of their reality.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR PREPARING INCLUSIVE CREATIVE BRIEFS

Incorporating inclusion into a campaign or project’s creative brief is a necessary step to ensure it translates into the creative. It’s not enough that the brief states a campaign should be inclusive. You must specifically explain how and why you are integrating diversity into the campaign objectives and development. It is a good practice to get feedback on the brief from people who are part of the diverse audiences you are trying to reach and represent. Build time into the creative review process for that additional inclusion-focused review.

Inclusive creative briefs should document the following:

- **Basic project information**—Campaign name, project lead, creative lead, date, project/billing code.

- **Situation analysis**—Start by providing a summary of the current situation driving the business need or interest in developing the new campaign. What is the issue you are trying to address or the behavior you want to change and why? How does this apply in particular to the diverse communities you are trying to reach? Provide as much background as possible in a paragraph or two and clearly state how diverse community members are impacted by the issue.
- **Assignment**—State the main ask in a sentence or two, being as specific as possible. E.g., “Develop a Latino-focused multichannel campaign to inform English-speaking Latinos in and around Portland about ways to save money on solar panel installation.”
- **Clear goals**—Document the intent of the campaign in a clear and concise way, specifically calling out objectives associated with diversity, equity and inclusion and the associated metrics.
- **Intended audience**—Explain who your target audience is and what you know about them. A campaign may have a primary audience—the main audience you are trying to reach—and a secondary audience. Provide specifics for each audience, including any research insights that can help inform how to best engage with them and how they should be represented in the campaign. Ensure you are being inclusive by documenting insights about subcultures, languages, media preferences, behaviors and other nuances such as common misconceptions or stereotypes these audiences confront on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender identity, geography, income, sexual orientation, ability or other factors.
- **THINK, FEEL, DO statements**—Consider and describe what the creative should inspire your audiences to THINK, FEEL, and DO as a result of your work. Summarize this in one, brief sentence for each action. Distilling this down helps establish a common understanding of creative intent.
- **Barriers**—Clearly state all known barriers that would keep the audience from taking action as inspired by your campaign. Keep in mind that these barriers will be unique to each of the diverse cultures and communities you want to engage with. Be sure to consider social, economic, political, environmental and physical factors when identifying key barriers, as well as how barriers may differ within subcultures.
- **Main message**—Capture in one sentence the most important thing you want to communicate with this campaign.
- **Reasons to believe**—Describe the top motivators for the audience to pay attention to and act on your message. What are the perceived benefits of the campaign for them and their communities?
- **Key messages**—Include any other important messages that your campaign should include to effectively engage with your diverse audiences. These messages should be crafted through a diversity lens that considers a community’s unique needs and situation, as well as audience-specific insights that can help you communicate better with them.
- **Creative do’s and don’ts**—Call out any particular things that should or shouldn’t be included in the creative based on your inclusivity goals. Describe specific social norms, stereotypes or generalizations to either avoid or include in visual, audio or written content, and revisit brand guidelines for visualizing diversity.

- **Channels**—List specific media and communication channels the campaign will use (e.g., video, radio, podcasts, social media, print ads, digital banners, word of mouth, etc.). If there are variations within a community or region, specify how the channel mix may vary based on subcultural characteristics.
- **Due date**—Provide a due date for the final deliverables. A timeline for key milestones can be helpful, too.
- **Creative budget**—Be clear about budget allocations and any special budget considerations.

## Conclusion

Energy Trust and the co-creators of this guide recognize there are multiple cultures represented in our state and across the U.S. Each of these cultures is in turn composed of other subcultures whose members identify with and relate to one another in unique ways. To talk about inclusion and multiculturalism requires a recognition of cultural diversity that integrates our social tapestry, without othering individuals and communities, or calling out those who are different or don't conform to the mainstream culture. It is important to instead honor cultures and keep in mind that at the core of all this is a person—an individual with a unique narrative for whom their culture provides a sense of belonging and a way to understand themselves and the world around them.

Inclusive multicultural marketing that effectively engages these individuals and their communities welcomes all those audiences—those multiple cultures—without alienating anyone based on sex, gender, religious belief, physical or mental ability, geography, ethnicity, cultural background, language or socioeconomic position. It embraces the complexities of their everyday reality, their values, their aspirations, their needs, their challenges and their motivations. Only when engaging in this way, will our campaigns—and by extension our programs, products and services—resonate with and make a difference for those communities we are trying to reach.

We will commit every day to reaching audiences in inclusive ways through culturally relevant campaigns, media and communication channels. We will not approach inclusive multicultural marketing as a “nice to have” but integrate it into what we do as an organization actively engaged with the communities we serve. This will require increased investments in these communities, diverse representation across all teams, collaboration with multicultural subject matter experts, and strong community relationships.

This guide is not static and will continue to evolve in step with our own growth and learning as marketers and communicators. Our success does not rest on perfection, but on our ability and willingness to think critically, to hold ourselves accountable in all that we do, and to continually evolve.

# Appendix 1: Biographies



**Percy Appau** is a multidisciplinary designer who enjoys making campaigns that are rooted in problem-solving. He is the current owner of Craft54 LLC, part-time faculty at Lane Community College, and Human Service Specialist 3 at the Oregon Department of Human Services. His expertise spans conceptualizing, prototyping and developing products with different mediums from print, digital, product design and three-dimensional design making.



**Emma Clark** is a senior outreach manager for communities of color at Energy Trust of Oregon. Emma was born in Portland but raised in a small village in Mexico, where she first learned the value of community. She has experience in small business development, non-profit management and outreach to community-based organizations serving underserved populations.



**Jennifer González** leads the multicultural communications team at C+C, a full-service agency that creates campaigns that inspire values-driven action for a wide range of social issues including healthcare, safety, education, transportation and the environment. Jennifer's devotion for all things multicultural runs as deep as her childhood roots growing up in Mexico City and her passion for traveling the world learning about people of all races, backgrounds and colors. She has been at the forefront of multicultural social marketing strategies and campaigns for Energy Trust of Oregon and many other clients.



**Mana Haeri** is a senior program marketing manager at Energy Trust of Oregon. While she grew up in the U.S., Mana was born in Tehran, Iran. Growing up in a bicultural, bilingual household inspired a life-long passion for foreign travel and has had a profound influence on her approach to marketing and communications. Mana holds degrees in public relations and strategic communications and brings almost 20 years of experience in brand and integrated marketing strategy for clean energy programs.



**Anna Madill** is the founder and CEO of Avenue, a B Corp digital and social media marketing agency for purpose-driven companies. Anna is passionate about having a meaningful impact on our community through volunteerism, serving on many boards as well as a speaker and instructor for several organizations covering topics like digital marketing, entrepreneurship, women in technology and anti-racism. Over the past 14 years, her responsibilities have spanned digital marketing leadership, agency operations, sales, account services, talent recruitment and mentorship.



**Melinda Molina** supports multicultural strategy and creative projects for a vast list of clients at C+C, a full-service agency that creates campaigns that inspire values-driven action for a wide range of social issues including healthcare, safety, education, transportation and the environment. Born and raised in Detroit, MI, Melinda has swayed between American culture and the Mexican traditions instilled by her immigrant parents her whole life. She pulls from the duality of these experiences to add a bicultural lens to all her projects with over a decade of public relations and project management know-how.



**Sloan Schang** leads the Energy Trust team responsible for the strategy and management of brand, advertising, digital channels, customer experience and organizational communications. Originally from Florida, Sloan leans heavily on his training and education as an anthropologist to apply the principles of multiculturalism and cultural relativism in building and nurturing relationships. He has 13 years of leadership and experience in the design and delivery of marketing and communications projects targeted to Energy Trust customers, particularly in the digital space, from initial strategy and concepting through post-launch analysis.



**Mauricio Valadrian** is a DEI consultant working with organizations in the private and governmental sectors nationally and across the world. Mauricio is a first-generation Colombian immigrant who has worked as a multicultural communications strategist and independent film maker for the last 20+ years. His practice is focused on outdoor equity and the interconnectivity between recreation, accessibility and conservation.



**Verónica Vázquez** is the founder and public relations lead for Innovare Communication Group, LLC, committed to meeting the needs of their clients and developing the creative ideas needed in order for businesses to succeed. Veronica has over 20 years of experience working in the non-profit and marketing industries. She is most recognized as the Executive Producer and TV personality at Elemento Latino, a TV show on Azteca Oregon, then Univision, and now social media platforms bringing news and entertainment to the Spanish-speaking community in Oregon and SW Washington



**Anthony Veliz** is the founder and owner of IZO Public Relations & Marketing, a full-service multicultural agency specializing in the Latino community. The son of farmworkers, Anthony has always had a passion for the community of Woodburn, where he lives and works. He has consulted with many public and private sector organizations on issues of equity, diversity, inclusion and recruitment.



**Larry Williams** is the chairman & CEO of The Anchor Group, a multicultural advertising and public relations agency also offering DEI and IDEA services. A native of Burke County, Georgia, and a 50-year Seattle area resident, Larry is a successful entrepreneur, business consultant and executive management professional. His creative and out-of-the box business thinking has helped many clients achieve brand elevation and become leaders in their industries with award-winning campaigns and projects.



**Paul Robert Wolf Wilson** is the chief storyteller at Ríos to Rivers and a Klamath & Modoc Photographer, based in his ancestral homelands of Southern Oregon and Northern California. Paul's work focuses on the connections between peoples, the lands and waters they steward, and the cultures that tie them together. A Leader in Environment, Access, and Diversity (LEAD) Ambassador for Northwest River Supplies (NRS), he works to provide opportunities for indigenous youth to strengthen and grow relationships with their rivers through white-water recreation.

# Appendix 2: Multicultural Theories and Terms Resource List

## DEFINITIONS, MEANING & SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

[lexico.com](https://www.lexico.com)

Collaboration between Dictionary.com and Oxford University Press

## DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE GLOSSARY

[uml.edu/student-services/multicultural/programs/dpe-glossary.aspx](https://uml.edu/student-services/multicultural/programs/dpe-glossary.aspx)

List compiled by Office of Multicultural Affairs at UMass Lowell (Lowell, MA)

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION GLOSSARY OF TERMS

[pacificu.edu/life-pacific/support-safety/office-equity-diversity-inclusion/edi-resources/glossary-terms](https://pacificu.edu/life-pacific/support-safety/office-equity-diversity-inclusion/edi-resources/glossary-terms)

List compiled by Pacific University of Oregon (Forest Grove, OR)

## GLOSSARY OF DIVERSITY TERMS

[qcc.edu/virtual-multicultural-center/glossary-diversity-terms](https://qcc.edu/virtual-multicultural-center/glossary-diversity-terms)

List compiled by Quinsigamond Community College (Worcester, MA)

## THE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION GLOSSARY [A LIST OF 200+ TERMS]

[blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-terms/](https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-terms/)

List compiled by Ongig (Oakland, CA)

## VISUAL SOVEREIGNTY: NATIVE-CREATED PUBLIC MEDIA

[americanarchive.org/exhibits/native-narratives/visual-sovereignty](https://americanarchive.org/exhibits/native-narratives/visual-sovereignty)

Information hosted by the American Archive of Public Information



# Appendix 3: Multicultural Stock Imagery Resource List

## DIVERSITY PHOTOS

[diversityphotos.com](https://diversityphotos.com)

Library covering every possible aspect of human diversity, offering royalty-free, affordable imagery.

## INDIGENOUS PHOTOGRAPH

[indigenousphotograph.com](https://indigenousphotograph.com)

Space elevating the work of Indigenous visual journalists and bringing balance to the way we tell stories about Indigenous people and spaces.

## RE:STOCK BY STORYBLOCKS

[storyblocks.com/diverse-stock-footage](https://storyblocks.com/diverse-stock-footage)

Footage of those underrepresented in stock in sets of collections exclusive to Storyblocks as a part of their mission to expand their library to represent all of us and help tell the stories of today and tomorrow.

## MOCHA STOCK

[mochastock.com](https://mochastock.com)

Stock imagery marketplace that connects artists and buyers committed to telling authentic stories.

## NAPPY

[nappy.co](https://nappy.co)

Beautiful photos of Black and Brown people, for startups, brands, agencies, and everyone else, for free.

## PICHA

[pichastock.com](https://pichastock.com)

Stock photo platform that brings the voices, faces, and stories of modern African and Black communities to the world and brands served.

## TONL

[tonl.co](https://tonl.co)

Culturally diverse stock photos that represent the true world we live in by showcasing the many ethnic backgrounds of everyday people.