ABOUT

WPP iQ

CONTACTS







argues Ogilvy Consulting's Shelina Janmohamed If brands really want to make an impact, they should focus their efforts on consumer experience to drive business growth, and that's where they will

Consumer equality: drive business

growth to tackle racial inequality

have the social biggest impact. Forget the Black Squares of Instagram, here's how to really make a difference.

When it comes to businesses tackling racial inequality, 'doing

the right thing' as a means of brand growth is back to front,

You've heard of financial inequality, health inequality, social inequality now it's time for a new metric for business growth: consumer equality. This is an inequality that lies at the intersection of consumer experience (what brands/corporations do) and the social context (the systemic and societal problems of inequality and racism).

After the murder of George Floyd and the rising anti-racism movement, the 'Black Squares of Instagram' campaign was a symbol of the good intent of brands to make change, but what impact did it actually have? The need was for businesses to think hard about the area where they can truly make a difference: consumer experience. But in 2020 in the UK, there was scant information about that simple but

Fast forward two years of depth research - including 100+ experts, 8,300+ respondents, 36 depth interviews, 22 expert interrogations, a depth brand study (BAV) and the creation of original population, category spend and disposable income modelling tools (Choreograph) - and the output is the UK's most comprehensive study into ethnicity and consumer experience.

The headlines? Consumers of all ethnicities say that ethnicity matters and

brands need to be in this conversation. Brands and advertising shape and

direct our cultural life and consumers expect them to step up. In fact, 82%

of respondents say that brands play an important role in shaping Britain's

culture and 80% agree that brands nowadays have a responsibility to

most obvious question: "What does it mean to be a Minority Ethnic

consumer?"

reflect modern Britain.

and inequalities in consumer experience add up at each touchpoint and multiply over a generation. Please see The Consumer Equality Equation Report, page 26. These are cumulative losses for the consumer, and they are a component of racial inequality. If brands are serious about playing their part, then they

need to focus on what they are set up to do: deliver consumer value

byproduct will be greater racial equality in society.

exchange. And by doing so, they will generate business growth, and its

Consumer experience is not trivial, it shapes every part of a person's life,

The 'consumer equality equation' The more equal the experiences a business delivers to its (Minority Ethnic) consumers, the greater the business growth. The byproduct is a more equal thriving society.

Rising consumer

and accelerate business growth.

community and religious heritage.

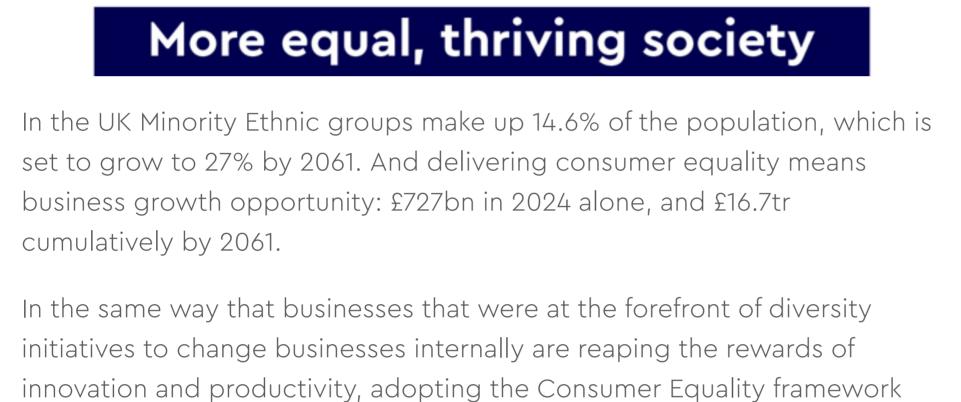
one-off moments and campaigns.

Consumer inequality in a business

equality success

Growing

business



The paradox of ethnicity Ethnicity matters: 91% of people from Minority Ethnic groups said it is important to their sense of who they are. But it's not the only thing that matters, identity is complex, nuanced and multifaceted, and that's what they expect from brands. These include aspects like regionality,

Brands are unfortunately paralysed by a paradox of their own: they rightly

want to do something, but the paradox is that they are doing it in places

consumer space which is exactly where they can reduce inequality.

And this is compounded by the paradox that brands do want to have

lasting impact (because this is vital for business success) but actions are

where they don't have the power to make lasting change, instead of in the

will catapult businesses in their engagement with Minority Ethnic groups

So how does consumer inequality show up in your business, and what can you do about it? Data inequality is a form of racism

Start by ensuring data and business tools include Minority Ethnic groups.

Remember to ask 'what is the norm' being used? Businesses are too often

Please see The Consumer Equality Equation Report, page 13.

set to operate at the 'norm' using White as the baseline. That is, after all, what society does too. But put on your 'consumer equality glasses' and you see the gaps.

Attention inequality

What does it feel like?

Don't make assumptions

According to a recent study by Mintel, Gen Z makes up 15% of the UK population. This consumer group is writ large all over trade headlines. But Minority Ethnic groups make up an approximately similar 14.6% of the UK population - but this is set to grow to 27% by 2061. The attention inequality to this consumer group is stark.

It should be second nature to businesses and marketeers to stand in the

world at the door and too often stereotypes dominate and lazy caricatures

Sadly, there are stereotypes and brands are missing out, and consumers

in six people from Minority Ethnic groups purchase luxury products

are being typecast. In the study we found for example that more than five

shoes of their consumers, but people leave their understanding of the

are made. Please see The Consumer Equality Equation Report, page 25.

compared to less than four in six of White consumers. Expect the unexpected Inequality doesn't just mean worse or negative. It also means not knowing or understanding your consumer and have preconceived expectations. As an example, one of the most unexpected findings was around financial

investment. 28% of people from Minority Ethnic groups aged 18-54 said

they were investing for wealth compared to 17% of the same age group of

The journey to establishing consumer equality as a business paradigm is

filled with hidden justifications that have plausible deniability.

well as tools that can be powerfully applied across all aspects of a

businesses. This is the greatest of all inequalities: the inequality of

care and attention applied to them as any other consumer group.

imagination that Minority Ethnic audiences should have the same insight,

It has to be across the business It's this multidisciplinary approach that yields nuance and complexity as

Check that the 'reasons' aren't actually excuses

White people.

respond to questions of attitudes, behaviours and insights. The BAV brand component reveals never before available perspectives on how brands are perceived by these groups and what brands can do to grow. And the data modelling tools from Choreograph deliver that crucial component of business planning - the size, scale and key target groups for growth. GroupM perspectives shone a light on what this means for media planning. The 1% shift Minority Ethnic groups have been treated with consumer inequality by

business. The consulting and consumer aspects (from Ogilvy Consulting)

It's time to re-imagine engagement and to scope out an alternative future. What is the commercial opportunity if your business could create a shift of

2031 £12.3bn

£40bn

£20bn

be.

2023 £2.34bn

just 1%? 2061 £120bn £107bn Clothing & fashion = £13.0bn £100bn Savings = £12.2bn **Business opportunity** nd082 Beauty & personal care = £4.07bn Groceries (excl. alcohol) = £41.4bn £60bn

Alcohol (at home) = £4.94bn

Eating & drinking out = £23.1bn

2021 The work and tools for consumer equality give brands the power to create an alternative future. And that future can come from the smallest shift: 1%. Just look at how quickly and widespread applying just 1% shift of consumer equality can yield. Two sides of the same coin

Consumer equality is a win-win: grow your business and as an output,

tackle racial inequality. What's not to like? But if your business is nervous

about being stuck between accusations of 'woke-ism' and 'tokenism' don't

Both are criticisms of the superficiality of brands delivering performative equality and having misplaced hubris at the breadth of their impact. The answer is instead to focus on where brands can make an actual difference, and to therefore apply a 'consumer equality' framework.

The call to courage But it takes courage for a business to lead change in the face of received wisdom and public approbation. Brands won't be surprised to hear that courage brings rewards. But the scale of those rewards might be eye opening. Courage was the attribute in the data that showed the greatest

resonance with Minority Ethnic groups, and also drove success in the eyes of all ethnicities. Because if you've read this far, there's just one final point to land. Applying consumer equality to people from Minority Ethnic groups makes life better not just for them, but for everyone. Because it delivers overall better

A 1% shift can take the alternative future from your imagination and turn it into reality. All you need to do is put on your consumer equality glasses. Please see The Consumer Equality Equation Report, page 24.

consumer experiences, leads businesses to be more successful and

innovative, and improves society and the economy overall.

The full 'Consumer Equality Equation Report' is available to download for free, as part of our pledge to act as a catalyst to drive consumer equality.

this article. The Consumer Equality Equation report was produced by Ogilvy

Choreograph's <u>Melda Tozluoglu</u> and BAV's <u>John Keaveney</u> contributed to

Consulting, GroupM, Choreograph, WPP BAV, WPP Roots and the Racial

30 November 2023 **CATEGORY**

SHELINA JANMOHAMED

Ogilvy Consulting

PUBLISHED ON

(in)

RELATED TOPICS People in all their diversities

At the interface of humanity and machinery MORE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Multinational companies must have an India strategy The Indian market is hugely attractive to brands, but multinational companies must

AI-DRIVEN

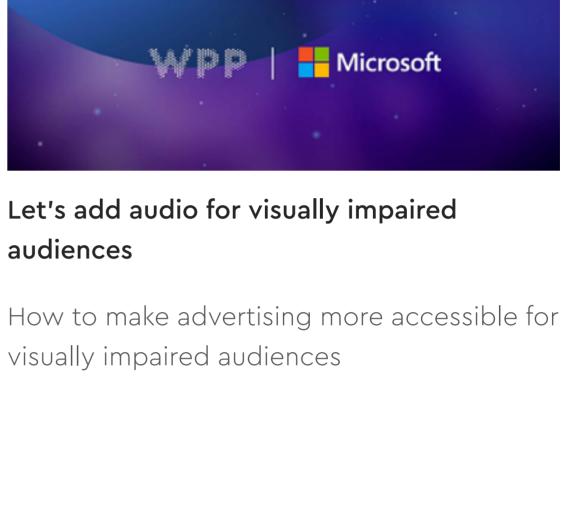
AUDIO

DESCRIPTION

How does trend analysis help brands plan for

Local customs drive global trends

the future?



Communications Experience

have a bespoke India strategy

© WPP plc 1999-2024

Privacy policy

Right to Speak

Equity Programme.