



The Power of a Modern Marketing Reset



A special report from the ANA's Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing
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THE PRESENT IS CULTURAL

Disruption is often seen as a key to innovation. 2020's unexpected events have put that theory to the test. The pandemic has magnified racial and cultural disparities. Today's social justice movement has brought anti-Black racism and xenophobia to the forefront. Supreme Court votes protecting both DACA and LGBTQ rights underscored an ongoing quest for equity. And through it all, the ANA's Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing (AIMM) has remained intensely focused on our mission — a mission that is in lock step with today's urgent call for racial and cultural respect and relevance. Our collective industries — marketing, advertising, and media — play a powerful role in image-making and image-breaking. It is essential to AIMM's mission to empower marketers as they connect brand optimization with societal strength, and work to ignite growth and inspire good. These values reflect the priorities of today's Modern Marketer.

Part of AIMM's Modern Marketing vision includes shining a light on industry bias and barriers and working to remove them. We can't ignore the harm caused by concepts like Total Market or an overreliance on big data. Marketers were led to believe they could trade off cultural specifics for perceived efficiencies. Culturally targeted strategies, media plans, and production were often diluted or replaced altogether. Marketers sought efficiencies, but in the end, Total Market didn't add up.

The good news is that marketers are hitting the reset button. After witnessing declines in loyalty and purchase intent from diverse segments, there is a growing interest among marketers to restore targeted efforts to maximize profit and growth. They are embedding work with cultural insights and relevant cues and strengthening segment-specific consumer/brand connections. And they are now able to quantify the benefits derived from putting culture first.

According to AIMM's Cultural Insights Impact Measure (CIIM™), which measures the impact of culture in ads and programming, ads that connect with consumers via culture increase purchase intent by over 300 percent. This measure unequivocally proves that culture matters. CIIM provides modern marketers with data points that support their commitment to cultural relevance. Those who invest in inclusive, insight-driven messaging will undoubtedly outperform those who don't.

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MEASURING CULTURAL IMPACT AND MORE

What can we learn from Total Marketing missteps, and how can CIIM strengthen performance? The harsh reality is that only one in eight Total Marketers infused their communications with cultural insights, according to ANA-AIMM's [2018 Multicultural and Total Market Benchmark Survey](#). This grim marketing reality exposed a few common but misguided practices. First, culture was often viewed as nice-to-have, an exercise occasionally folded into communications efforts. It was not business as usual. Additionally, Total Market efforts, with proper reach and frequency, and sometimes with inclusive casting, were seen as sufficient to resonate with diverse growth audiences.

These damaging trends sent AIMM in search of a definitive, undeniable quantification of the value of culture in marketing. A conclusive study demonstrated that consumers *do* connect more deeply with ads and content that reflect their culture. It also confirmed that this means much more than diverse casting placed into “white-washed” situations. The study led to the creation of a new standardized measure that gauges the accuracy of cultural reflections in ads and content as perceived by consumers, not machines.

The Cultural Insights Impact Measure™, better known as CIIM™, proved that to achieve excellence in cultural relevancy, ads must resonate in six key areas:

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CIIM™ KEY AREAS



Inclusion and Acknowledgement



Respect of Culture and Values



Celebrations of Cultural Pride



Authentic Portrayals



Positive Reflections



Good Role-modeling

From a quantifiable standpoint, CIIM findings reveal much more than a marginal lift. Well-executed culturally insightful ads have an impressive multiplier effect on purchase intent and ad effectiveness KPIs.

When, for example, consumers perceive ads as culturally relevant, they are:



Furthermore, CIIM's findings demonstrate that ads perceived to have high cultural relevance are:

- Twice as likely to enhance brand perception
- Three times more likely to be effective when compared to ads with low cultural relevance
- Three times more likely to lift purchase intent



DISMANTLING STRUCTURES: CONSTRUCTING A CULTURE-DRIVEN FRAMEWORK

A recent *Ad Age* article written by AIMM member Aaron Walton, president of and CEO at Walton Isaacson, broke down the ways in which Total Market went from “offensive” to “being dangerous.” Walton explained that the only time so-called “marginalized” communities “wind up in the margins is when dominant-culture narratives put us there.” This is an important reframing of what and who we view as central to our advertising targeting. No longer can the general market stand in as code for White America, because to deny the over-emphasis on this single segment is to continue

to minimize the importance of all other segments. How can a brand be “for people like me” if marketers allow the multicultural “me” to remain ambiguous, generalized, or unknown?

Facebook CMO Antonio Lucio recently condemned the industry’s reliance on Total Market, saying that marketers are taking the “average of the average of the average to create this single message that is directed to this hypothetical consumer who has nothing to do with the real consumer who is consuming our products.”

These statements align with AIMM’s own rallying cry: **#SeeALL**. This statement serves to support cultural equity in messaging, staffing, and resource allocation. It points us to a more specific mandate than the Total Market approach. It asks us not only to examine *who* we see but also to reflect on *what* we see — what actions, what behaviors, what insights.

Marketers who are committed to the principles of a #SeeALL philosophy hold themselves accountable for:

- Seeking out inclusive opportunities from the onset of planning
- Valuing all segments and not defining any as irrelevant
- Measuring the impact and influence of work done across segments



Now that CIIM quantifies the relationship between accurate cultural reflections and consumer engagement, marketers have a mechanism for evaluating insight-driven work. The question isn’t whether culture matters; we have moved beyond that. It’s how to leverage culture and make it an integral part of the work. Modern Marketers acknowledge bias-driven barriers, but don’t let them stand in the way. They know success depends upon:

- *Examining structural blind spots:* What is preventing your organization and the agencies that it partners with from using segment-specific strategies? If lack of familiarity or expertise on a given segment is a perceived obstacle, what resources can be tapped to remove that obstacle and move forward?
- *Embracing representation:* Study after study indicates that diversity drives innovation. Representation is more than a casting exercise. It’s a commitment to reflect culture internally as well as externally. When teams reflect society, brands have a better chance of connecting authentically.
- *Identifying segment-specific insights:* Consumers who have been marginalized or underrepresented are hungry for insights that are drawn from their cultural realities. Every community is diverse in and of itself, so there is no limit to the stories and strategies that can come from community perspectives.

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ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFERENCES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A one-size-fits-all approach flies in the face of Modern Marketing know-how. Not only must we segment audiences to better connect with them, we must also turn the segmentation spotlight internally. By examining how our companies are structured, we can gain insights into what might work best for our individual organizations when it comes to addressing diverse segment opportunities.

A few examples:

MARKETING AS A P&L OWNER

For a company where Marketing is a full P&L owner, like a CPG, Modern Marketing means starting from a business perspective. You do opportunity sizing, find the most attractive audiences, and then build brand equity and sales through a combination of awareness, consideration, and conversion initiatives. In these companies, Marketing owns the P&L, and each decision must have a measurable impact on business performance. If targeting Multicultural segments as a primary audience represents the most viable opportunity, everything else flows down from this. Marketers should not assume that White Non-Hispanic segments are always a primary audience for a program/campaign. It is incumbent upon the modern marketer to analyze opportunities segment by segment, as early in the business planning process as possible.

MARKETING AS A COMMUNICATIONS PARTNER

In other matrixed organizations, Marketing may not own the P&L. In fact, they may not even own the “4 Ps” of marketing. They may only own one or two, and act as an advisor. In these groups, Marketing may co-develop the business objective, and in turn identify the right strategy to achieve it. Modern Marketing in this scenario takes a different approach through strategy development. Marketers get to determine the right audiences to communicate to via media platforms; based on those audiences, marketers must also identify the right implementation of upper funnel vs. lower funnel, and behavior-based segmentation vs. demographic vs. attitudinal. In such organizations, marketing mix models often indicate that marketing only drives a portion of the business results. As such, audience planning is critical in determining the right audiences to prioritize through marketing, especially when not all of the business's volume is affected. It is through this stage of audience planning that multicultural audiences should be considered, sized, and addressed. This can take the form of bespoke campaigns, targeted initiatives or sub-campaigns, or more integrated mass campaigns.

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MARKETING IN SMALLER COMPANIES

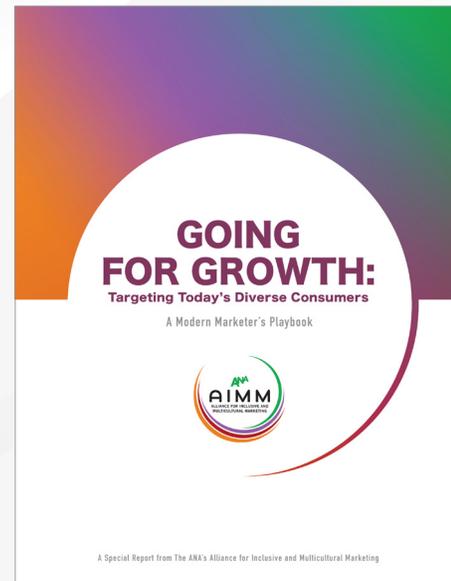
In a smaller, growing company, such as a digital-first company, growth is the number one objective and marketing is a critical driver. However, marketing in such companies may primarily take the form of performance marketing, as it is the most measurable way to track marketing's impact on the bottom line and help businesses grow. Every dollar spent can be tracked to how it converts. For smaller companies, even if multicultural efforts may not be a critical component of initial strategies, it is important to address multicultural opportunities when conducting strategy/planning, using performance-based metrics to identify untapped revenue sources.

A CALL TO SEE ALL

The more brands embrace culture and purpose-driven initiatives, the more AIMM and others quantify the connection between stimulating growth and serving the greater good. The VAB (Video Advertising Bureau), as an example, recently released *Do The Right Thing*, a 40-page marketing guide with findings that align with AIMM's CIIM initiative. P&G has seen "its best sales results in over a decade amid high-profile corporate and brand campaigns centered around diversity, inclusion, racial equality, and social justice." Denny's drove triple-digit increases in website traffic with its "See You at Denny's" D&I campaign. And various studies show that consumers are demanding more from CEOs and brands when it comes to demonstrating purpose in clear, actionable, and transparent ways.

Along with the development of best-in-class measurement tools like CIIM, AIMM is committed to organizational development and education in support of multicultural and inclusive marketing excellence. Already, AIMM's *Going for Growth, A Modern Marketing Playbook* has proven to be a critical resource for marketers who are future-focused. This playbook is a roadmap for culturally relevant practices and processes, providing a blueprint for Modern Marketing success. It is part of an ongoing AIMM initiative to develop culturally insightful playbooks, webinars, and educational tools that empower the marketing community for today and beyond.

Certainly 2020 has not been ordinary, and we cannot speak of a bright future without acknowledging the loss and devastation experienced worldwide. Still, as a marketing community, we rise to the challenges by facing the unknown with creativity, imagination, and innovation. We contribute to a better tomorrow with a commitment to representation and resource dedication — with a commitment to #SeeALL.



**AIMM's *Going for Growth,*
A Modern Marketing Playbook**

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MISSION

To create a powerful voice that elevates multicultural and inclusive marketing to promote business growth in an increasingly diverse marketplace