



# Beyond the rainbow

REPORT

A Revolt report on where 50 year-old Pride should go next.

# A REVOLUTION IS BORN

No one would have imagined June 28 to be a revolutionary night, but the Stonewall Uprising of 1969 was the spark that set off a movement for LGBTQ+ rights, igniting Pride marches around the world. Since then enormous strides have been made around the globe - basic rights declared by the UN have gained support in 85 countries, Ellen DeGeneres has publicly declared her sexuality on international television, and brands like Ikea have led initiatives to make LGBTQ+ people commonplace in advertising.

Globally, the LGBTQ+ market totals over \$5 trillion and companies have emerged to show their support. But recently, activists have started pushing back. Criticisms of rainbow-washing abound. And there are calls for Pride to return to its protest roots and advocate for marginalised gender and sexual minorities.

This field report reflects on the history of the LGBTQ+ movement to imagine where it might go next and what role brands should play in its next era.



## TERMINOLOGY

LGBTQ+ refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and the "+" represents those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity. A synonym is GSM which refers to gender and sexual minorities. For more information on accepted terminology, please refer to GLAAD's Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition.

Intersectionality acknowledges the diversity of experience within the LGBTQ+ community. For example, the experiences of a White gay man will be vastly different than the experiences of an Asian trans woman. Intersectionality attempts to consider the disproportionate burden that these marginalised groups carry, such as a Filipino lesbian dealing with homophobia in addition to racism.

BAME is used as an abbreviation for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicities.

# WHAT'S HAPPE NED?

01

A brief look at the events that kicked off a LGBTQ+ revolution around the world.

02

An exploration of recent developments amongst the key players in the evolving movement for LGBTQ+ rights.

# WHAT'S HAPPE NING?

# WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

03

A speculative look to the future and the key developments that could shape our lives.

04

A to-do list for brands and people looking to support the next era of the LGBTQ+ revolution.

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

# WHAT'S HAPPENED? 01

# A HISTORY OF LGBTQ+ COMMUNICATIONS

THE WAY IN WHICH LGBTQ+ RIGHTS HAVE BEEN ADVOCATED FOR HAS ALWAYS BEEN ENTWINED WITH THEIR LINK TO CULTURE.

**2380 BCE**

EARLIEST EVIDENCE OF LGBTQ+ HISTORY SHOWN IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ARTWORK, BUT THIS HISTORY WAS LARGELY DISPUTED BY INTOLERANT HISTORIANS

**348 BCE**

DESPITE PREVIOUSLY CLAIMING GAYS TO BE BLESSED, PLATO DECLARES THESE RELATIONSHIPS TO BE UGLY AND UNHOLY IN "THE LAWS"

**1935**

FREUD IS ONE OF THE FIRST SCIENTISTS TO EXPLAIN "HOMOSEXUALITY" CANNOT BE CLASSIFIED AS AN ILLNESS

**1969**

STONEWALL UPRISING BEGINS AFTER 200 PATRONS ARE HARASSED BY POLICE, MARKING A TIPPING POINT IN THE LGBTQ+ MOVEMENT

**1973**

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION STOPPED CLASSIFYING "HOMOSEXUALITY" AS AN ILLNESS, A STEP TOWARD INCLUSIVITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

**1981**

US NEWSPAPER LINKS HIV/AIDS TO GAY COMMUNITY, DRIVING DISCRIMINATION AND POLITICISING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HIV/AIDS TREATMENT GLOBALLY

**1994**

IKEA RELEASES FIRST US COMMERCIAL FEATURING A SAME-SEX COUPLE, SIGNIFYING MAINSTREAM ACCEPTANCE OF LGBTQ+ PEOPLE AND THEIR LIVES

**2001**

THE NETHERLANDS BECOMES THE FIRST COUNTRY TO ACHIEVE MARRIAGE EQUALITY, DRIVING A GLOBAL PUSH FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

**2009**

US EVANGELICALS EXTREMISTS SPREAD BIGOTED RHETORIC ABROAD, LEADING TO THE APPROVAL OF THE 2014 ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY ACT IN UGANDA

**2016**

PLUS CLUB SHOOTING KILLS 49 PEOPLE & REMINDING THE WORLD THAT LGBTQ+ RIGHTS ARE STILL UNDER ATTACK

**2019**

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY DEMANDS PRIDE'S RETURN TO PROTEST AS TRANS AND MINORITY RIGHTS REMAIN AT RISK

# THE SPARK THAT LIT THE FIRE

THE STONEWALL UPRISING  
TRIGGERED A GLOBAL  
PUSH FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS. [🔗](#)

The Stonewall Uprising of 1969 marked a significant turning point for LGBTQ+ rights. Reflecting on his experience during the Uprising, Scott G. Brown explains “I had no idea that it would be a revolutionary night, but then again, a spark can cause a fire”.

Until Stonewall, the LGBTQ+ community had protested politely for equal rights, but oppression reached a head during the “Lavender Scare” of the 1950s with over 5000 US government employees systematically harassed due to their sexual orientation. In June 1969, police raided The Stonewall Inn in the United States and 200 patrons were finally pushed to put niceties aside. A year later, Pride marches emerged around the world to pay tribute to the resisters, a tradition that continues today.



# MEDIA MAINSTREAMS THE RAINBOW MOVEMENT



PLAYWRIGHTS PUSHED CULTURE AND TESTED THE WATERS FOR PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE. [↗](#)

After ten short-lived performances, Mae West's *The Drag* was banned for its depiction of LGBTQ+ lives in the 1920s. However, her efforts paved the way for *Hairspray* and *Kinky Boots*, productions that were welcomed on Broadway in recent years. Theatre provided artists a mechanism to highlight the challenges that the LGBTQ+ community faced.

MUSIC SERVED AS A SAFE HAVEN AND PLATFORM FOR LGBTQ+ ARTISTS. [↗](#)

Long before Pride protests, music allowed LGBTQ+ artists to express themselves. During WWII, speakeasies introduced straight patrons to gay culture through Blues music and drag performances.

In more recent history, Judas Priest lead singer, Rob Halford, challenged intolerance in heavy metal culture when he came out in a 1998 interview.

Frank Ocean publicly wrote about his sexual orientation in a 2012 Tumblr post, marking a significant moment in hip hop history, another genre known for its bigoted language.

LGBTQ+ GOES FROM CODED TO COOL IN ADVERTISING. [↗](#)

Advertisers began addressing the gay community through coded messages as early as the 1920s.

In 1994, IKEA became the first known brand to air a commercial featuring a gay couple. Society was finally beginning to acknowledge relationships that were same-sex.

JC Penney featured a real-life gay couple in its 2012 Father's Day catalog declaring "we want to be a store for all Americans". By this time, it was clear that advertising was shifting towards equal representation.

# TRADING IN A REVOLUTION FOR A POT OF GOLD

BRANDS JUMP ON PRIDE  
BANDWAGON AFTER REALISING  
THE POTENTIAL FOR THE LGBTQ+  
MARKET. [🔗](#)

From its start in 1970, Pride protests enjoyed a fabulous carnival atmosphere - but it was clearly always a protest at heart. Since then Pride has grown in scale and public acceptance through generous corporate support. But some argue this has come at a cost. Today, corporate floats outnumber LGBTQ+ groups and critics such as activist Peter Tatchell argue that this corporate support has “de-gayed” pride.

Showing support for LGBTQ+ communities and their rights remains a progressive, creative and rewarding stand for brands to take. The question is how to support the LGBTQ community and not detract from the movement.

# 2.5X

INCREASE IN CORPORATE  
SPONSORSHIP OF LONDON  
PRIDE SINCE 2013.

SMIRNOFF  
PRIDE IN EVERY FLAVOR



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## 02



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# PREVIOUSLY SILENCED VOICES ARE HEARD

MAINSTREAM POP CULTURE  
BEGINS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE  
MARGINALISED MEMBERS OF THE  
LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY. [📺](#) [📺](#)

Years and Years singer, Olly Alexander, stole the show at Glastonbury using the platform to highlight the importance of intersectionality in the LGBTQ+ revolution, specifically drawing attention to the countries where LGBTQ+ lives are systematically under attack. This mainstream awareness creates momentum within the community.

The fame of RuPaul's Drag Race has helped the public to understand the distinction between gay, trans, and drag.

## TELEVISION & FILM START TO GO INTERSECTIONAL. [📺](#) [📺](#) [📺](#)

While LGBTQ+ representation on television is at an all-time high, minority groups within the LGBTQ+ community are rarely depicted, but this is beginning to change.

Toy Story 4 includes a small scene with lesbian parents, giving the 7 million LGBTQ+ parents in the US a bit of representation on the silver screen. Backlash from intolerant groups, such as One Million Moms, demonstrate just how much more we need to fight for equality.

Pedro Almodovar releases Pain & Glory as an autobiographical film giving audiences a glimpse into the life of a BAME gay man.



“AS A PAKISTANI MAN &  
AS A GAY MAN, I DON'T  
REALLY FEEL  
REPRESENTED”

- HAFEEZ, 30




## ATHLETES ARE SKIPPING THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT TO COME OUT. [📺](#) [📺](#)

Kelley O'Hara, a player on the US Women's soccer team, famously kissed her girlfriend. BuzzFeed referred to the kiss as profound because “she hadn't previously made any grand pronouncement about her sexuality, but openly kissing her partner spoke for itself”.


## ACTIVISM

# FIGHTING TO TAKE BACK THE REVOLUTION

CAMPAIGNERS ECHO CULTURE & TAKE OVER ADVERTISING SPACE TO QUESTION WHETHER SPONSORSHIP HELPS OR HURTS THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS. 



Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants

“CORPORATE FLOATS, AND ONEROUS RULES AND COSTS HAVE RIPPED OUT THE HEART OF A ONCE POLITICAL MARCH WITH A PARTY ATMOSPHERE.” 




Wikimedia

**MORE YOUTH IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+ THAN EVER BEFORE** & THEY'RE TAKING POLITICAL ACTION WITH TWICE AS MANY PARTICIPATING IN CAMPAIGNING AND RALLIES COMPARED TO THEIR STRAIGHT PEERS. 



Reuters

ARRIVING UNANNOUNCED, A BLACK TRANS WOMAN TOOK THE STAGE TO REMIND EVERYONE OF THE **65 TRANS PEOPLE, NEARLY ALL PEOPLE OF COLOUR, WHO WERE MURDERED** IN THE US IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. 

## INSTITUTIONS

# TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK

INSTITUTIONS ARE INCREASING IN ACCEPTANCE OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY GLOBALLY, THOUGH INCREASINGLY POLARISED.

Since the Netherlands legalised marriage for same-sex couples in 2001, over 70 countries have followed suit. Most recently, in 2019, Taiwan became the first Asian country to achieve marriage equality. Furthermore, over 550 companies scored 100 in the Corporate Equality Index signalling a genuine interest in equality.

AND THE “LAVENDER” CEILING IS FINALLY BEGINNING TO CRACK.

Just like women face a “glass ceiling” within corporations and politics, LGBTQ+ people face similar barriers to promotions and decision making power. However, LGBTQ+ community finally getting representation in political and religious groups including Japan’s first out gay lawmaker and Jerusalem’s first out gay Orthodox Rabbi.

YET, STATE-LED VIOLENCE AND BIASED RHETORIC IS STILL PREVALENT.

Violence against LGBTQ+ communities around the world continues, most recently marked by attacks led by ruling political parties in both Poland and Uganda during Pride. Furthermore, some countries are moving backwards in policy, such as Brunei re-introduction of stoning LGBTQ+ individuals.



COUNTRIES THAT STILL DO NOT PROTECT AGAINST LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION

101



The Independent

## CONSUMERS

## I WANT BRANDS THAT REPRESENT SOCIETY



01

**MAJORITY OF CONSUMERS WILL BOYCOTT BRANDS WHO DO NOT SUPPORT THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY. [icon] [icon]**

Over 80% of Americans surveyed believe that showing gay or lesbians in ads simply reflects the reality of today and these consumers are using their wallets to show support for the LGBTQ+ community.

02

**BRANDS NEED TO ALIGN WITH PERSONAL VALUES. [icon]**

The LGBTQ+ market is estimated at \$5 trillion globally! In the UK alone, 1.4M people identify as LGBTQ+, of which over 28% are ethnic minorities. Shoppers aren't looking for more rainbow merchandise. They're looking for brands to who recognise this diversity within the LGBTQ+ community.

Thinx, a period underwear company known for its progressive advertising, launched a campaign featuring non-gender conforming individuals, a first for any major menstruation brand.

03

**INCREASING NUMBER OF LGBTQ+ YOUTH. [icon] [icon]**

Half of all UK youth identify as LGBTQ+ signalling a change in how sexuality and gender are viewed. LGBTQ+ youth are no different than their peers in their buying power and influence on culture.

While showing support for the LGBTQ+ community used to demonstrate a brand's progressiveness, its now table stakes for this generation.

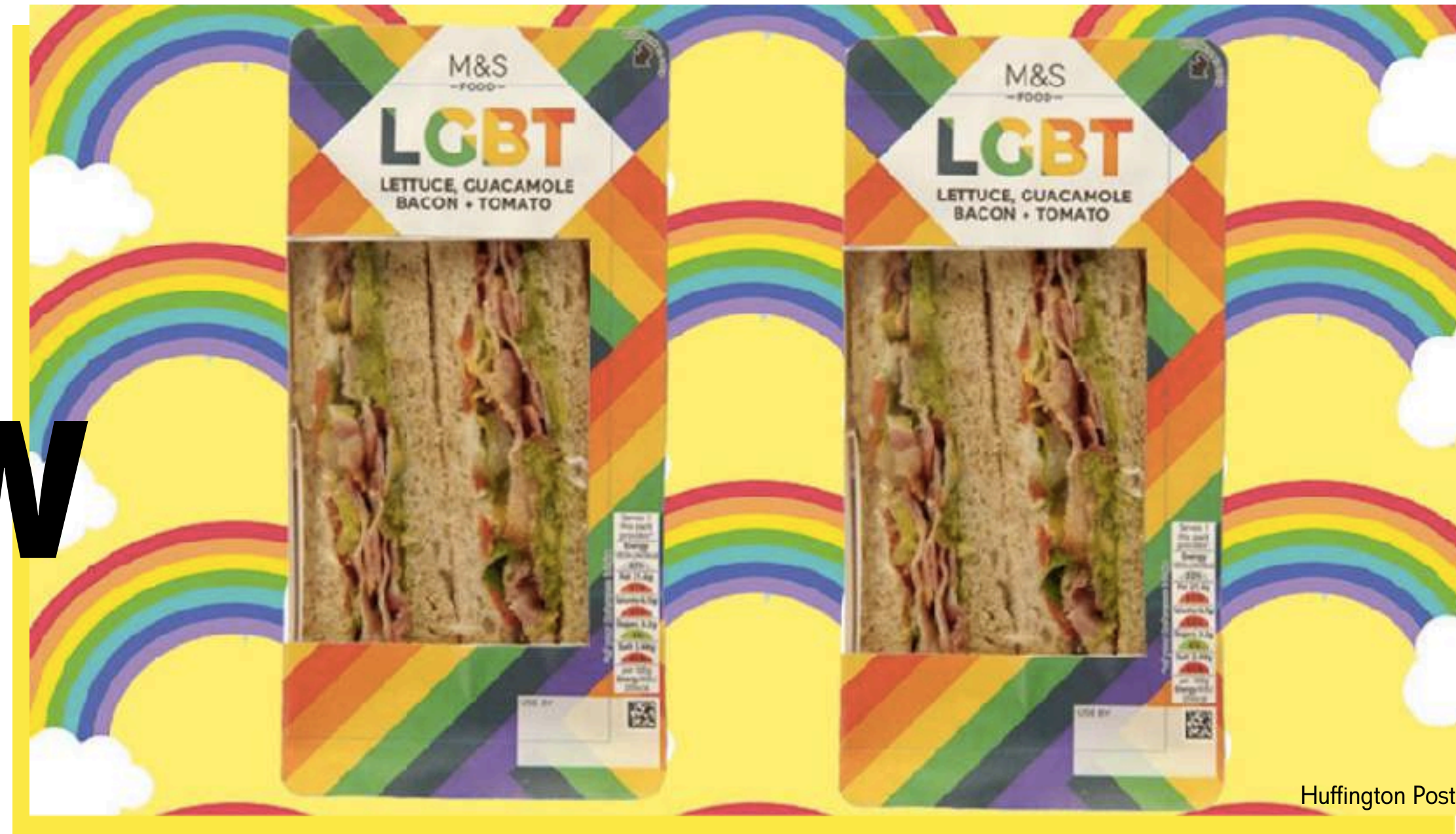
04

**INCREASING # OF LGBTQ+ FAMILIES. [icon] [icon]**

About 48% of LGBTQ+ millennials are family planning, a higher proportion vs. straight peers. Furthermore, research indicates that LGBTQ+ parents tend to be wealthier and more educated. Unsurprisingly, these parents and their children face more discrimination and harassment in schools and don't feel reflected in advertising.

## BRANDS

# THE RISE OF RAINBOW RETAIL



01

**SINCE THE 90S, BRANDS HAVE INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY. [icon] [icon]**

As LGBTQ+ people gained rights and acceptance, brands began showing their public support through advertising and merchandising. Brands often avoid referring to sexuality and instead focused advertising on “love” or “pride” or “equality”.

02

**SUPPORTING EQUALITY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT. [icon] [icon]**

As more youth come out as LGBTQ+ and millennial LGBTQ+ families grow, brands are recognising the business opportunity of this previously ignored market.

03

**BUT BACKLASH ENSUES FOR THOSE CAUGHT RAINBOW-WASHING. [icon] [icon]**

While rainbow-coloured merchandise drives awareness of Pride, critics label these gestures as “slacktivism” and point to the vague product donation campaigns make it difficult to feel as though these brands truly care. Is donating just 5% or an undisclosed amount actually driving change? Critics point to the Breast Cancer pink campaigns that drove millions to charities with unclear impact.

04

**AND BRANDS GETTING IT RIGHT ARE REWARDED. [icon] [icon]**

Paddy Power famously donated to LGBTQ+ charities every time Russia scored during the World Cup in a clever ploy to protest the nation's anti-LGBTQ laws.

Uber not only showcased minorities in their “Many Voices of Pride” campaign, the company consistently ranks highly on the Corporate Equality Index.

# WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

# 03



01

# THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.



02

# THE NEXT 5 YEARS.



03

# INTO THE BEYOND.



# THE NEXT 12 MONTHS BY 2020...



## BRANDS WILL NOT MARCH IN PRIDE UNLESS IT HELPS THE FIGHT. 📌 📌

Brands will get creative and work with LGBTQ+ charities to understand the nuanced ways they can support and use their influence to change the status quo. It's the era for intersectionality and businesses will use their physical absence from Pride to make space for excluded groups. In places where LGBTQ+ rights are under fire, brands will use their presence to increase acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community.

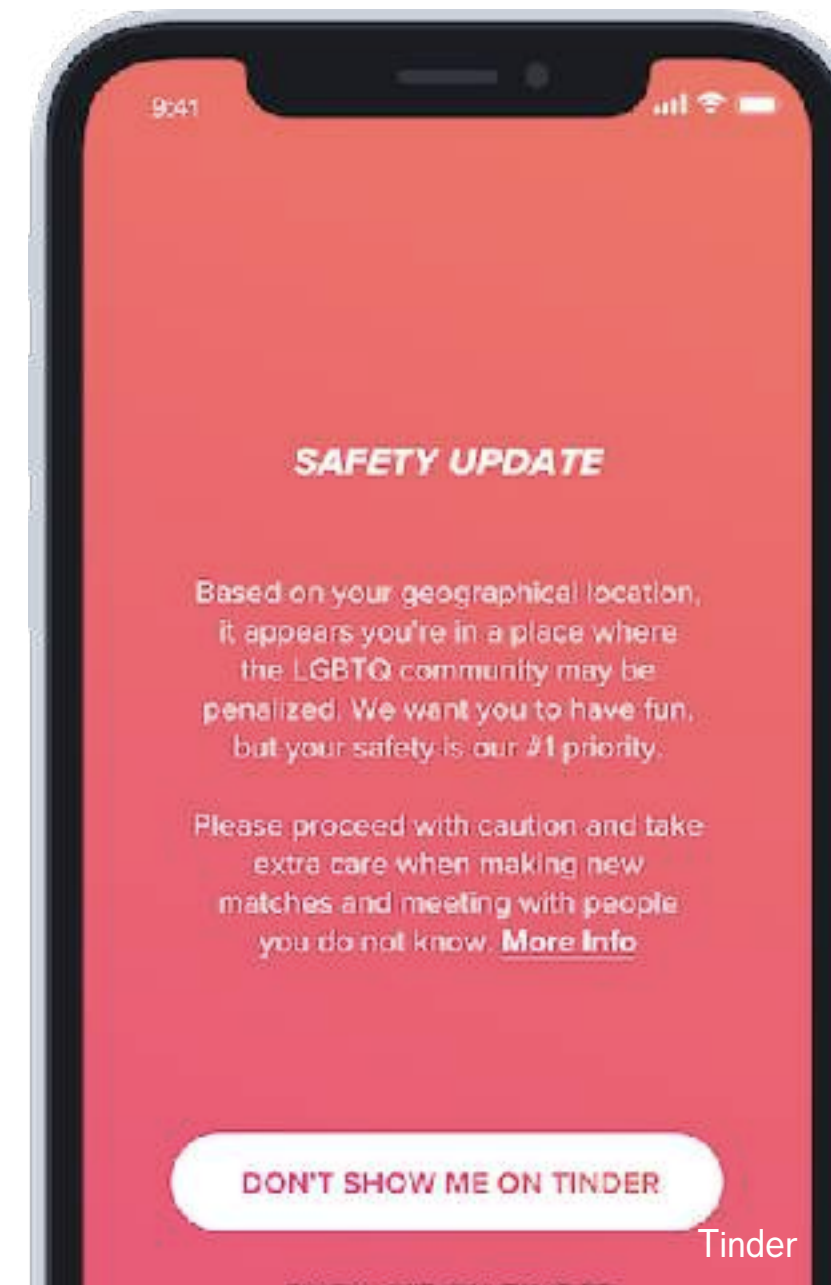
## BUSINESSES WILL USE POLICY TO DEFEND LGBTQ+ RIGHTS GLOBALLY. 📌 📌

Numerous Fortune 100 businesses and the NBA used their influence to push back against transphobic policy in the US, enabling a settlement on the controversial HB2 bill in North Carolina.

Just as Tinder pushed back to protect data from intolerant governments, more brands will be challenged globally to protect LGBTQ+ lives to ensure internal policy backs up outward marketing.



Getty Images



## BRANDS WILL DESIGN PRODUCTS TO ADDRESS LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY NEEDS. 📌 📌

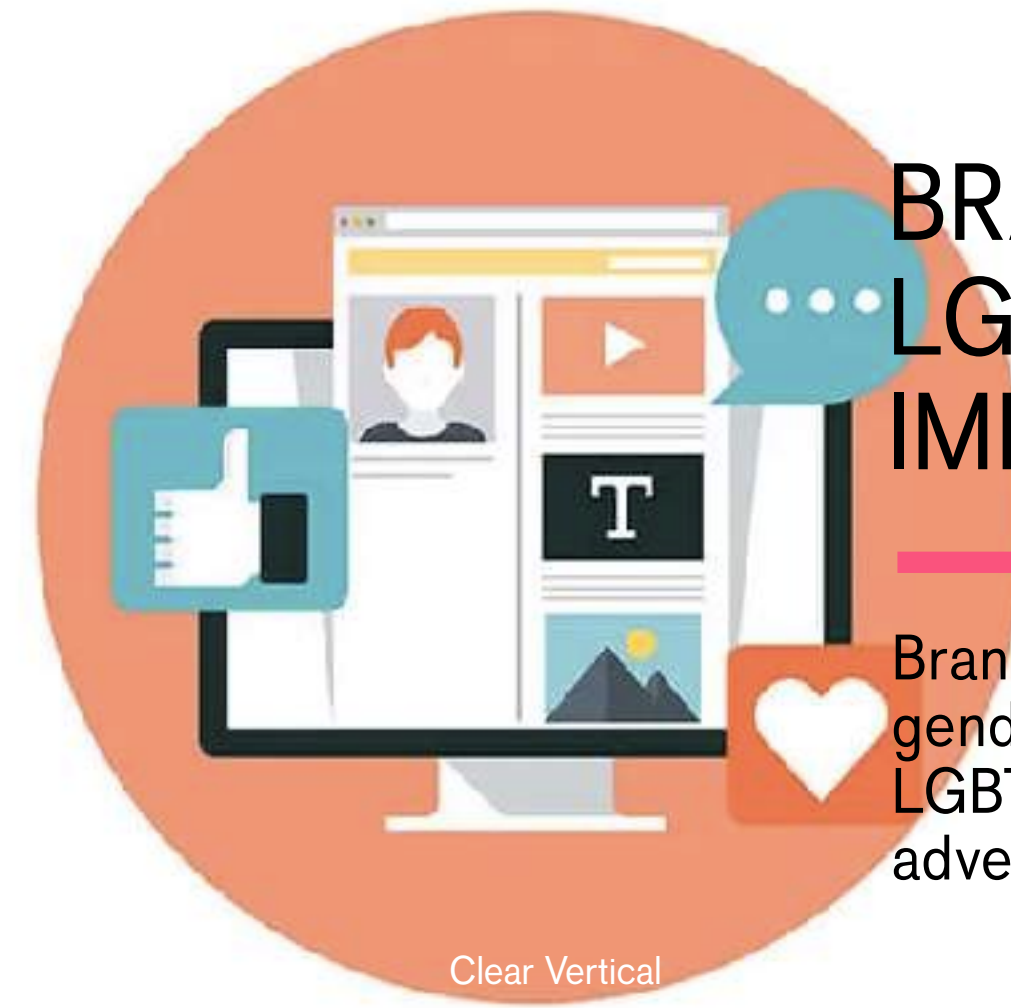
Brands like Tinder and Google are recognising a need to move beyond rainbow-coloured merchandise. They're stepping up and inclusively designing products to address safety and mental health concerns for the LGBTQ+ community.

# THE NEXT 5 YEARS BY 2025..



BUSINESSES WILL PROVE THE VALUE OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY. [icon]

Brands recognise that the antidote to criticism of rainbow-washing is to ensure they are clear on the difference they want to make and clear on the measurement that will show whether they're succeeded.



BRANDS WILL INVEST IN LGBTQ+ RESEARCH TO IMPROVE MEDIA PLANNING. [icon]

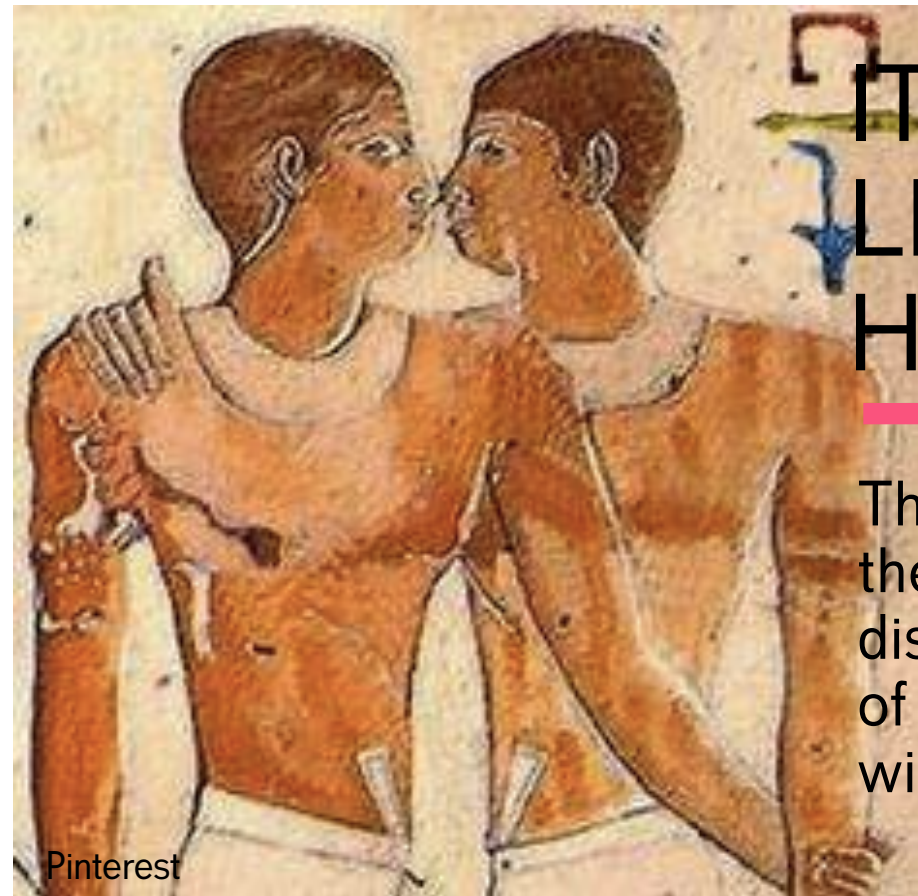
Brands will no longer target based on binary gender and age alone, they will begin to invest in LGBTQ+ specific research and in turn, tailor advertising to this under-served segment.



PEOPLE WON'T BE SHOCKED TO SEE LGBTQ+ LIVES IN FILM & LITERATURE. [icon][icon][icon]

It will be commonplace to talk about LGBTQ+ lives and historical figures. Britain's £50 notes will feature Alan Turing, a war-time hero who was chemically castrated for his sexuality. New York will build a monument to honour the trans women who led Stonewall, and LGBTQ+ lives, will be featured as mainstream films and books.

# INTO THE BEYOND BY 2050...



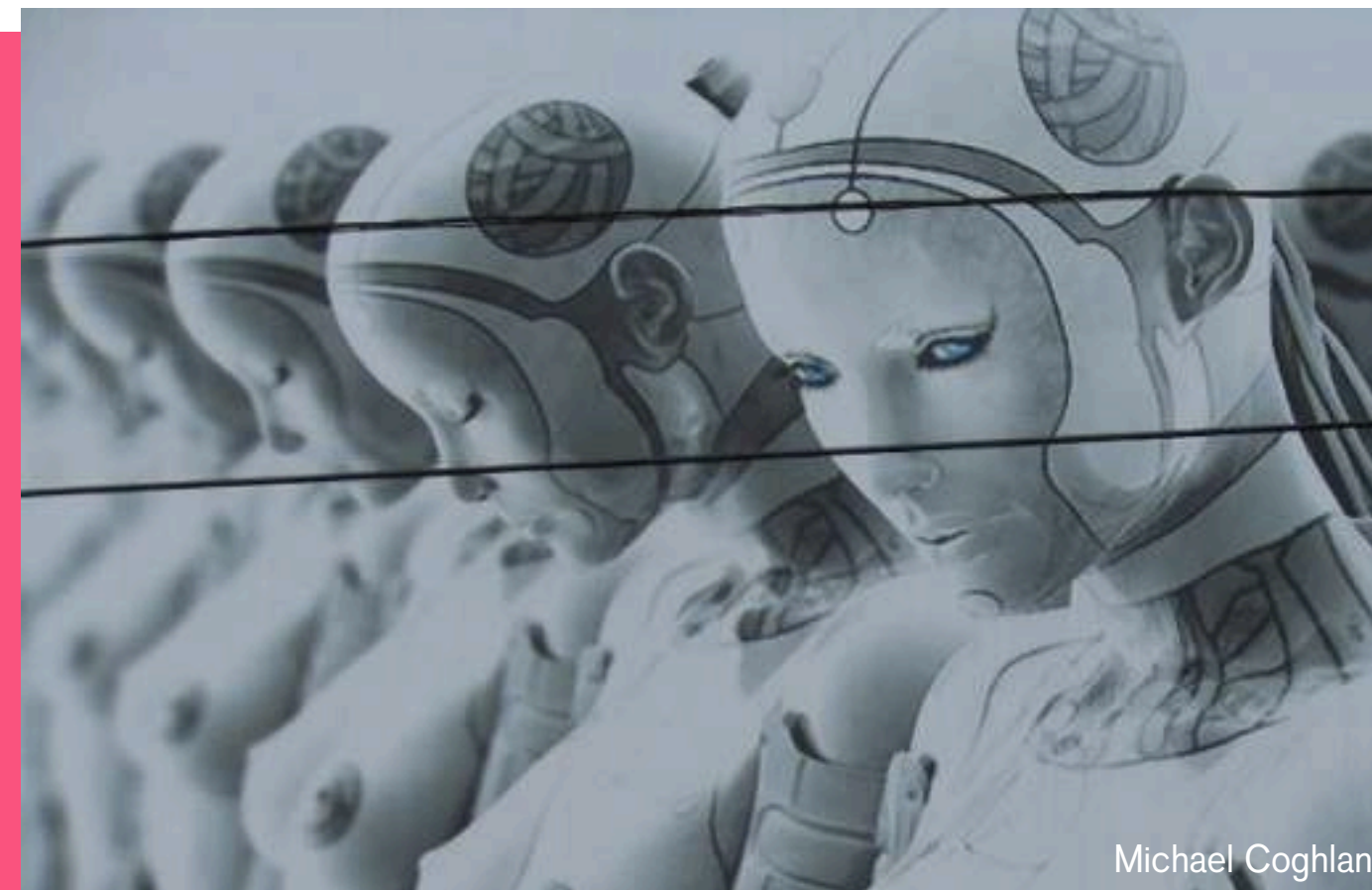
## IT'S THE NORM TO LEARN ABOUT LGBTQ+ HISTORY.

The role of trans and people of colour during the Stonewall Uprising has been largely discounted until recently. Following the likes of California, school curriculum and museums will mainstream LGBTQ+ history.



## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES GO EXTINCT.

GLAAD's 2018-19 reports that "44% series regulars on primetime scripted broadcast are people of colour", a 4 pt increase versus last year. This momentum will continue in corporations, media, and politics until equal representation is achieved. Inclusivity will become table-stakes.



## THE TRANSHUMANIST NARRATIVE CHANGES HOW WE DEFINE GENDER & SEXUALITY.

As technology enhances artificial organs and telepathy, philosophers hypothesise a future where gender and sexuality are re-defined.

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

04

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

The next era of the LGBTQ+ revolution is in sight as marginalised groups are given the spotlight. Here are three tips for businesses trying to support the LGBTQ+ community in a meaningful way.

## BUSINESSES

### 1. LOOK INSIDE FIRST.

Assess your policies around the world to make sure you're truly championing LGBTQ+ rights. Use your influence to protect rights in countries where LGBTQ+ lives are under attack. [🔗](#)

### 2. PICK A FIGHT.

Recognise the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community, listen to their needs, and focus on issues affecting these marginalised groups. Don't be afraid to go global with your fight for equality. [🔗](#)

### 3. PROVE YOUR WORTH.

Brands that succeed will be thoughtful in asking the community what it needs, giving more than they're taking, and actually measuring their impact in the world. [🔗](#)



Anonymous Artist

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

The next era of the LGBTQ+ revolution is in sight as marginalised groups are given the spotlight. Here are three tips for businesses trying to support the LGBTQ+ community in a meaningful way.

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## PEOPLE

### 1. LEARN & UNLEARN.

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Learn about LGBTQ+ history and the experiences of those around you. Ask questions and challenge media that excludes LGBTQ+ narratives. [🔗](#)

### 2. FIGHT BIGOTRY

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Write, tweet, or speak to leaders of government and business to enforce LGBTQ+ rights. Speak up when you see intolerant behaviour. [🔗](#)

### 3. PROTEST THROUGH PURCHASE.

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Support brands who are supporting LGBTQ+ rights through their policies and products and boycott brands who are simply rainbow washing.



The intelligence brands need on their  
purpose transformation journey.

# Revolt Intelligence

Find out more  
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