



MUST KNOW

Trends in Diverse Design & Brand Experience





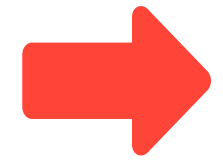
Diversity.
Inclusion.
Accessibility.
Authenticity.

5 Trends Driving the Future of Creative Strategy & Design



These are all words that have become core to our vocabulary as designers and members of creative teams. But how are we actively putting these buzzwords into practice? What issues are we prioritizing? And most of all, how are they dictating the way we work as a team as well as the products, content and experiences we're creating for our audiences?

The HOW Design team wanted to spotlight the trends driving diversity and accessibility efforts. These are our findings:



Trend 1: Diverse Photography Subjects

Consumers today want to see themselves in the content and ads they consume. They want to feel seen and represented by brands and businesses. But for many communities, this is still not a reality.



64% of people say they're more trusting of brands that represent diversity in ads.¹

But in a study of 50 brands from the Top 200 media spenders, Deloitte agency Heat found that:

>1%

- **Less than 1% of ads represented someone who would identify as LGBTQ+.**
- **Less than 1% of ads featured a subject with a disability.²**

TAKE ACTION

Take careful stock of the images you use. Don't just think about whether they accurately represent your target audience. Consider whether you may be unintentionally leaving out *potential audiences* with your selections.

Trend 2: Inclusive Photography Environments and Scenarios

True diversity and inclusivity requires more than being more intentional about photography subjects. You also need to think about their environments and scenarios. For example, are you gravitating to a photo of a woman cooking dinner for a family or teaching a young child? This is an innately stereotypical scenario.

Searches *diverse workplace, diverse group,* and *multicultural group* grew by more than 160% between 2019 and 2020.

TAKE ACTION

As you map out your photo options, don't just look at individual characters; look at the scenarios they're in. How would your audience interpret them? Are there any stereotypes present? It's important to also do a quick gut check of your own implicit biases and challenge them during this process.

Trend 3: Inclusive and Global-Ready Copywriting

What is your brand's audience makeup? Whether you have a global presence, global consumer base or your audience largely speaks English as a second language, you need to think critically about word choice and structure. For instance, there are some slang terms or phrases that are common in the U.S. but confusing to those in Italy or France. Something that reads nicely on your Instagram may come off as clunky and frustrating when it's translated to Japanese.

60% of multi-location marketers say location campaigns directly impact consumer purchase decisions.

Localized content receives 12X more engagement than general, "non-localized content."³

TAKE ACTION

It may hurt your creative soul but be extra mindful of detailed or poetic language that may isolate or confuse consumers who speak a different language. Try to simplify content for global audiences to ensure seamless translation. If you want to reach these audiences more effectively, you also can find subtle elements, including color palette and imagery, to resonate.

Trend 4: Accessible Web UI and UX

Making your website accessible for everyone isn't just good business. For some, it's the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires certain businesses to make web content accessible to blind users, deaf users and those who need to use voice tech, screen readers or other tools to assist them.

Firms are also losing \$13 trillion in sales by ignoring disabled consumers.

TAKE ACTION

Alignment between design, web and content teams ensures that everyone is operating (and creating) with accessibility in mind. For example, making all web controls visible and access to access and click makes a huge difference. Visit the [Web Accessibility Initiative](#) for more guidance.

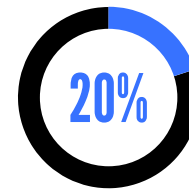
Trend 5: Content Visibility and Consumability

You may have the most beautiful creative, but can web and social visitors easily access and consume the content they need? Different digital channels have different features (and quirks), and that means they have different accessibility issues teams need to prepare for.

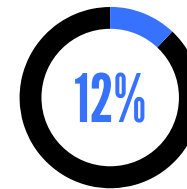
Social media platforms are comparatively the most difficult to use ⁵

Platform is somewhat difficult, or very difficult to use | % selected

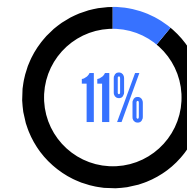
Includes people with visual, hearing, speech and cognitive disabilities



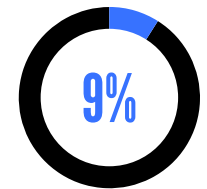
Social Media



Web Browsers



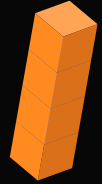
Audio Streaming



Video Streaming

TAKE ACTION

As you develop your creative content strategy, ensure you're taking the proper precautions to make information accessible for all. Add content captions to social videos. Include detailed imagery captions in social posts. Give people the option to listen to articles and resources instead of read them. Connect with your content team to develop standards and workflows.



Drive Positive Change in the Community

As the digital ecosystem continues to evolve, new content channels and formats will undoubtedly come into the mix. It's up to us to always consider the impact we can make in driving new standards and best practices through these channels to ensure they're accessible and welcome for all.

Get Involved Today!

HOW DESIGN ONLINE

Join us online for our exciting digital sessions! Join us December 14th, 2021 2pm ^{EST} for Stephen Gates Digital Session Articulating the Value of Design.

Visit [HOW Design Online](#)

HOW DESIGN LIVE

Registration for HOW Design Live in Boston in 2022 will be opening soon but until then... we'd love to connect with you about event updates and give insider information as we move toward May! Share your contact info by getting on the list.

Get on the List