



Sustainable Technology and AI-Driven Solutions in Marketing: Exploring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for Future-Ready Brand Engagement

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Abstract. In a time where consumers require authenticity and social responsibility from companies, incorporating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) into marketing initiatives is an important success driver. This paper explores how DEI affects customer participation and brand loyalty, highlighting how it can cultivate emotional bonds, trust and lasting advocacy. Today it is a quick evolving digital world where marketing is undergoing metamorphosis on the shoulders of growing technology and shifting ethical norms. The interplay of these factors is reconfigured with the norms on how brands interact with consumers and provide customized experiences by establishing trust among them. The research considers shifting customer expectations especially among Millennials and Gen Z who value brands that align with their values and social awareness.

Through case studies of Nike, Ben & Jerry's and Airbnb the paper identifies how inclusive advertising, product development and cultural sensitivity lead to brand differentiation and consumer retention. The most important DEI strategies, including authentic representation, inclusive product innovation and accessibility in customer experiences are examined to demonstrate their effectiveness in building diverse and loyal consumer bases. Lastly, the paper research into emerging trends, including AI-based bias-free marketing and the growth of DEI programs in digital and immersive marketing environments. As companies increasingly see, the competitive value of inclusivity DEI is not only a corporate social responsibility program but a core foundation of sustainable and effective brand interaction.

Keywords: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Big Data Analytics, Augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), Block chain,

1 Introduction

Emerging Trends in Technology Driven Marketing

1.1 Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning: Personalization at Scale

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are the main pillars of innovative marketing. These technologies allow businesses to monitor huge amounts of data and predict consumer behavior. This helps in serving super personalized content. Netflix, OTT platform uses AI algorithms to personalize and show recommendations using viewing history. This is to provide a very personalized user experience that increases engagement and customer retention.

Apart from entertainment retail giants like Amazon use AI to personalize product recommendations and change prices in real time. It is used to fine tune inventory levels on a large scale. The advantage here is that AI allows companies to treat hundreds of millions of customers as individuals by presenting them with right content and offers an appeal on an individual basis.

Example of Fitbit's data driven health insights and marketing

Fitbit brand in the health segment gathers immense amounts of health information such as heart rate and sleep quality. It also tells the customer about the activity level on a given day. Fitbit feeds this information into AI algorithms and offers users personal health information such as what sleep trends specify or what kind of exercise will be most effective for one's health. These are further utilized in order to target personalized marketing initiatives. For example, Fitbit's app sells its premium membership based on a person's activity records. Such hyper personalization messages ensure continued user interest and push users to invest more in their health and fitness.

1.2 Big Data Analytics and Real time Insights

Increasing touch points in the digital medium have led to large collection of consumer data. Big data analytics give marketers the chance to collect data and identify patterns that make sense for actionable insights. Real time analytics allows brands to react quickly to unstable marketing environments. For instance, during live events such as the cricket world cup, firms use social media analytics to measure viewers' sentiment and make real time campaign advertisements.

By combining the latest data, analytics with old-fashioned marketing tactics businesses optimize their messages and address the correct demographics to get large return on investment. Yet this information based strategy creates huge ethical dilemmas around the issues of data privacy and customer consent which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Example of coca cola's real time social media analytics

In sporting events such as the FIFA world cup coca cola uses real time social media monitoring to track consumer sentiment around the world. They can analyze the audience tweets, Facebook updates and other online interactions in real time as events happen. Coca cola quickly measures audience responses to its various advertisement campaigns and other event promotions. With this real time feedback the brand can modify

its messaging in real time, making sure that its marketing tactics are engaging with a large set of global audiences and driving engagement and ROI.

Data-Driven Campaign Optimization

Coca Cola combines data across different touch points such as point of sale data and online interactions to optimize its marketing campaigns. By using a multi-channel strategy, the company is able to customize campaigns for particular countries and populations.

1.3 Immersive Technologies with Augmented and Virtual Reality

Redefining customer interaction, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are making memorable customer experiences that dissolve boundaries between the real and digital world. Retailers like IKEA have used AR to allow customers to view furniture sitting at their home before buying it. This is ensuring a more fulfilling shopping experience for their customers.

VR presents brands by proving convincing narratives. Auto firms provide potential customers with virtual test drives. These technologies capture consumer imagination and provide a new landscape of interactive marketing.

Example of Audi's virtual reality showrooms

A global leader in the automotive industry like Audi has embraced virtual reality to revolutionize its customer engagement. Audi's VR showrooms has helped its potential buyers by immersing themselves in a fully interactive environment where they can explore different car models, customize features and even experience virtual test drives without leaving their homes or the showroom. This creative innovation of VR not only improves the customer's knowledge of the design and operation of the vehicle but also provides an interactive and satisfying experience. By using this innovative technology, Audi has established new standards for ethical interaction and customer service which ensures that technological innovation is incorporated into the purchasing process seamlessly.

1.4 Block chain: Increasing Transparency and Trust

Block chain technology has the potential to update digital marketing with great transparency. This system can be used to trace transactions, ensure data integrity and prevent advertisements fraud. For example, block chain based platforms are offering transparent records of advertisements expenditure with advertisers and assuring them that their money is being invested in a proper way.

Block chain also serves as an essential medium for preserving consumers' information. Here customers are empowered with the ownership of their data and damage proof consent records are created. Block chain restores confidence in customers when privacy scandals and data leaks are common. Widespread use necessitates breaking technical barriers and assures that block chain usage follows moral standards.

Example of Adidas' Block chain enabled product authentication and marketing transparency

Adidas is one of the world's major sportswear brands. It has used block chain technology to increase transparency and credibility in both its product offerings and marketing campaigns. From the last few years Adidas has implemented block chain in its digital framework for its business growth.

- Product Authentication strategy

Adidas brand applies block chain technology to establish records which confirms the main source and validity of its limited edition of run sneakers. Every item receives a digital token that gets encoded on the block chain. The consumers have no doubt in confirming that the product is original. It creates trust among customers for luxury and sportswear industries as well as builds brand confidence among customers.

- **Marketing transparency strategy**

The incorporation of block chain based platforms Adidas can monitor transactions and ad expenditures with accuracy. This technology offers an audit trail for all digital marketing activities. It includes the advertising budgets being spent openly and effectively. This method prevents ad fraud and increases trust among consumers and advertising partners as the metrics for each campaign can be measured independently.

1.5 The Emergence of Social Media Innovations

Social media is a developing environment for marketing innovation. Instagram and Snapchat for instance are not just content delivery mediums but also platforms for good brand experiences. Influencer marketing has become a progressive type of marketing where influencers are selected on the basis of data driven recommendations to match brand values and demographics.

In recent times, social media platforms are becoming ecommerce enabled so that consumers can buy things in the app itself. This in-built integration of content and commerce gives rise to new opportunities. Here consumer interacts with the brands and opens up concerns related to transparency and consumer protection that need to be tackled to maintain ethical standards.

Example of Nike's social media innovation strategy

Nike is a worldwide leader in the sports shoes segment. It has successfully connected with social media innovations to build engaging brand experiences and incorporate e commerce features. Nike leads the way with data driven marketing strategy.

- **Data driven influencer marketing strategy**

Nike team up with various influencers ranging from top sportsmen to new age fitness influencers whose profiles are based on data analysis. These influencers represent Nike's core unique selling propositions like innovation, athleticism and empowerment. They post and share behind the scenes sessions, individual achievement stories and energetic product demos with the customers which resonate with different communities across the world.

- With the help of clear sponsorship of partnerships and authenticity in influencer marketing Nike supports transparency and honest marketing practices. Such kind of practice creates trust among consumers and their social media experiences are validated.

2 Ethical Issues in the Digital Marketing Era

2.1 Consumer Consent and Data Privacy

Technology allows more detailed tracking and summarized report of consumer behavior. Due to this data privacy has emerged as a key ethical concern. The adoption of regulations such as the general data protection regulation (GDPR) in the European Union and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States highlights

the significance of consumer consent and data protection. Now the firms need to merge data gathering for personalization with respect to privacy. Apple's recent advertising effort has highlighted privacy as a new priority. Their focused strategy of keeping data gathering to a minimum level and giving consumers clear choices about whether to participate in tracking or not is both in line with regulation which creates consumer confidence. Marketers need to innovate such kind of ethical frameworks as data practices that are transparent and consumers are informed about it.

2.2 Algorithmic Bias and Fairness

AI algorithms may be strong, but they are not bias proof. Based on past data these systems can spread current inequalities without realizing it. This leads to biased behavior. This can be explained when some job hiring algorithms were discovered to prefer male applicants over female applicants which was based on the past hiring data.

Example of Amazon's AI recruiting tool strategy

Amazon is a technology and e-commerce giant which created an AI based hiring tool to automate the recruitment process. The tool was discovered to have high algorithmic biasness. The system was programmed on past hiring records which consists of more male candidates. The system used to prefer resumes that followed these patterns by discriminating against female candidates. Amazon shut down the tool after constant monitoring process. This instance is a reminder to international brands of the need to correct algorithmic biasness to provide fair and ethical practice in technology facilitated processes.

2.3 Sustainability and Social Responsibility

Consumers in this modern era took brands to be sustainable and ethical. Patagonia has majorly established itself as environmentally friendly and transparent supply chain providers. Their advertising efforts focus not only on the quality of their products but also on their care for the planet. Technology is the main reason for this shift. Brands can prove their loyalty to sustainability through measurable metrics using data analytics and supply chain tracking technologies. This transparency caters to consumer demands for ethical concerns and distinguishes brands in this saturated marketplace.

3. Issues Confronting Marketers Where Technology Meets Ethics

3.1 Walking the Line between Personalization and Privacy

Modern marketing always has an issue of maintaining a balance between customer personalization and their privacy rights. Brands should know their customers and customize their experience to suit their needs and wants. By gathering such type of data becomes difficult as it is not approached in an ethical manner. For example, targeted advertising that is based on detailed behavioral data enhances customer experience. Marketers must maintain this balance by adopting privacy and designing appropriate principles. This helps in ensuring that data collection is done transparently

3.2 Navigating Regulatory and Compliance Landscapes

Online marketing is mostly complex and keeps on changing. Compliance is necessary for business to follow as it helps in maintaining ethics. Otherwise, this can lead to serious penalties and can severely harm a brand's reputation. Businesses must invest in

strong compliance systems and do frequent audits. It should have continuous employee training to ensure ethical conduct. This challenge claims technical fixes and cultural transformation towards respecting consumer rights and data integrity.

Example of Apple's strategy used to maintain privacy and data integrity

Apple is a global brand known to protect consumer privacy. Features like App tracking transparency in IOS allow the apps to ask users for their clear consent before tracking data across other apps or websites. This method fulfills regulatory mandates and ethical data handling. By integrating privacy controls into its operating system, Apple has gained huge trust from its international users.

3.3 Ethical Consequences of Automated Decision Making

Automation is all about transforming marketing from ad placement to customer support. This is done with the help of chatbots. Automated systems fail to make human judgment and take decisions that are efficient and compassionate.

For example, a chatbot might provide quick answers to customer inquiries. If it misunderstands a customer's emotional state, then the interaction could seem insensitive. To take care of these challenges companies have implemented mechanisms and maintain a human interference approach where critical decisions are solved and reviewed by human experts.

3.4 Combating Misinformation and Ensuring Authenticity

Marketers always must face new challenges in this digital era. False information quickly damages consumer trust and also damages brand reputation. Social media platforms are often the main cause for spreading wrong information.

During product launches or crisis situations inaccurate or misleading information spreads rapidly, which causes confusion and dilutes trust among the consumers. Brands need to implement fact checking, strong content verification mechanisms and open communication with its customers to avoid misinformation. Authenticity in marketing is a defensive measure and an offensive step towards establishing long-term credibility.

4. Opportunities for Marketers: Leveraging Technology for Ethical Innovation

4.1 Leveraging Technology to Enhance Consumer Trust

Block chain offers an open system for making transactions and sharing data. One tangible example is that Block chain authenticates ad impressions and clicks in online advertising. By guaranteeing that each transaction is traceable and auditable, brands can counteract ad fraud and provide transparency to their stakeholders.

In addition, AI driven customer service solutions based on natural language processing can provide more empathetic and productive assistance. These technologies enhance operational effectiveness as much as they foster trust in the form of consistent and high quality consumer interactions.

4.2 Empowering Consumers through Transparency

Today's techno savvy Consumers demand more transparency from the brands they support. Brands that clearly communicate their data usage policy and offer easy options for consent gain customer loyalty. For instance, Apple's privacy features in its products

allow users to control app tracking and data sharing. The utilization of technologies for real time reporting and data visualization brands have the ability to enable consumers with information about the use of their data. The brands information regarding transparency and telling about how data is used, it creates a relationship of partnership between the brand and consumer.

4.3 Driving Sustainability through Technological Innovation

Sustainability is a competitive advantage among the various brands. Improvements in technology are allowing firms to monitor their environmental footprint and make their supply chains more sustainable. For example, firms like Unilever use advanced analytics to measure and minimize their carbon footprint on a global basis.

Digital platforms also enable consumer participation in sustainability activities. Companies use apps and online forums to inform consumers about their sustainable products and engage them in green campaigns. This not only supports the ethical position of the brand but also builds a strong customer base with corporate accountability.

4.4 Real-World Case Studies: Ethical Innovation in Action

Some brands have managed to maintain the line between technology and ethics successfully and these can be used as examples for other brands to follow. Here are a few examples:

- Patagonia is known for its environmental sustainability. Patagonia uses technology in its marketing efforts by using data to inform its transparent supply chain. Its "Worn Wear" campaign which promotes repairing and reusing products basically uses digital storytelling to support its ethical position.
- Apple always highlights privacy as a marketing tool that has changed the way consumers think. Their campaign supports data protection and control as essential values which makes the brand a protector of digital privacy. By using this marketing strategy Apple stands out in the marketplace and also sets out a new ethical standard for the technology sector.
- Nike's digital service uses innovative technology like AR and VR to encourage customer experience. The Nike Fit application employs machine learning to provide right shoe size suggestions which lessens returns and wastage. Meanwhile Nike invests more in environmental initiatives to maintain its advertisement messages. These advertisements speak and innovation.

These case studies explain that when ethics and technology are blended together in harmony then brands are able to attain great competitive advantages. This also helps in upholding consumer trust and social responsibility.

4.5 Future Forecasts: What the Future Holds

In the future the convergence of technology and ethics will continue to transform the marketing world in several important ways like

- Hyper Personalization with Ethical Guardrails
AI is becoming increasingly advanced and hyper-personalized marketing will soon become even more intense. This will further be accompanied by strict ethical standards and regulatory control to make sure that personalization does not compromise consumer privacy and discriminatory behavior.
- Sustainability Metrics Integration

More people are becoming environmentally conscious towards sustainability. This will emerge as a top performance indicator of marketing success. Sustainability measuring and reporting technologies will be integrated as marketing innovations, and this will help brands to display their ethical pledges in real time.

- **Emergence of Ethical AI**

The consciousness about algorithmic bias will increase the demand for ethical AI frameworks. Organizations will invest in creating AI systems that are not just effective but also transparent and accountable.

5. The Place of DEI in Customer Interaction and Brand Loyalty

As brands traverse the changing marketing environment, incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is not only a social obligation but also a strategic benefit. Customers, particularly younger generations, increasingly demand that brands stand for social causes, reflect diverse communities genuinely, and promote inclusivity in their marketing. DEI is an important part of enhancing customer interaction and fostering long-term brand allegiance. The following section discusses how companies can apply DEI values to marketing strategies and showcases the direct benefits of inclusivity.

5.1 Understanding the Importance of DEI in Marketing

DEI marketing is more than just representation—it impacts consumer trust, brand attitude, and customer interaction. Brands that authentically embody the diversity of their consumers build stronger relationships, increase consumer satisfaction, and establish themselves as forward-thinking innovators in their sectors.

5.1.1 The Changing Consumer Expectations

Today's consumers, especially Gen Z and Millennials, want brands that share their values. Research indicates that almost 70% of consumers want brands to actively support diversity and inclusion. Brands that don't adopt DEI risk losing large segments of their audience.

For instance, Rihanna's Fenty Beauty changed the face of the cosmetics market by introducing 40+ foundation shades to suit a wide variety of skin tones. This inclusivity was received with open arms, and the brand saw higher sales and customer loyalty. Brands can build meaningful engagement and become industry leaders by filling gaps in the market.

5.1.2 DEI as a Driver of Brand Trust and Reputation

Customers are more inclined to trust companies that visibly endorse DEI initiatives. A company that supports equity and inclusion develops a reputation for being socially responsible, which manifests in greater customer loyalty. Ben & Jerry's is one company that has developed brand loyalty through its strong support of racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and fair trade, which strongly resonates with their customers.

5.2 Tactics for Incorporating DEI into Customer Engagement

DEI implementation in marketing necessitates more than tokenistic moves; it involves a thoughtful plan that includes practices of hiring, inclusive advertising, and culturally attuned communication. Some of the important strategies firms can adopt are as follows:

5.2.1 Inclusive Advertising and Authentic Representation

Brands need to make their advertising campaigns a true representation of the diversity of their target markets. True representation is more than tokenism and is a commitment to showcasing people of varied races, ethnicities, gender identities, abilities, and body types.

Nike's "You Can't Stop Us" Campaign showcased a diverse array of athletes, highlighting strength and solidarity between different cultures and identities.

- Dove's "Real Beauty" Campaign featured women of various shapes, sizes, and ethnicities, pushing traditional beauty standards and redefining marketing inclusivity.

Customers can spot fake representation, so brands need to make sure diversity is woven into their storytelling and not a one-off marketing gimmick.

5.2.2 Inclusive Product Development

In addition to marketing, businesses should create products and services that are inclusive of diverse communities. For instance:

Mattel's Barbie dolls now come in various skin tones, body types, and disabilities, mirroring diversity in the real world.

Apple's iOS Updates added more diverse emojis, including varying skin tones, same-sex couples, and disability symbols.

Through prioritizing inclusivity as a central aspect of product development, businesses can make their products appeal to larger groups of people.

5.2.3 Cultural Sensitivity in Marketing Campaigns

Understanding cultural nuances is crucial for brands operating in global markets. Companies must be aware of cultural sensitivities to avoid missteps that could harm their reputation.

5.3 The Role of DEI on Brand Affinity

Customers are more inclined to be loyal to brands that actively promote inclusivity and equity. McKinsey & Company found that firms high in diversity are 35% more likely to outperform others in terms of financial performance.

5.3.1 The Relationship Between DEI and Emotional Loyalty

When customers see themselves reflected in a brand's language, they bond with the brand on a personal level. Emotional loyalty is stronger than transactional loyalty because it creates long-term brand advocacy.

An example is Starbucks' LGBTQ+ inclusivity efforts, like providing transgender employees with health benefits and observing Pride Month. These actions have reinforced its customer relationships and employee morale.

5.3.2 Inclusive Customer Experience

A genuinely inclusive brand makes its customer experience available to everyone. These include:

Website Accessibility: Ensuring that websites are readable to visually impaired people using screen readers.

Physical Store Accessibility: Making spaces wheelchair accessible.

Customer Support in Multiple Languages: Providing support in multiple languages to serve multi-lingual customer bases.

Microsoft has taken the lead with companies by adding accessibility to product design, so technology is accessible to people with disabilities.

5.4 Case Studies: Brands That Have Successfully Implemented DEI Strategies

There are several companies that have successfully incorporated DEI into their customer engagement and marketing strategies, resulting in favourable brand perception and customer loyalty.

5.4.1 Airbnb's "We Accept" Campaign

Following increasing reports of discrimination, Airbnb initiated the "We Accept" campaign, reiterating its stand on inclusivity. The campaign included diverse families and highlighted the company's position against discrimination in housing rentals. The campaign enhanced the brand's image and gained more customers who appreciated inclusive policies.

5.4.2 Netflix's DEI Strategy in Content Development

Netflix focuses on inclusive content by creating movies and series that depict diverse cultures, identities, and experiences. The streaming giant has taken steps to:

- Fund productions by underrepresented filmmakers.
- Provide on-screen representation of diverse racial and ethnic groups.
- Create stories to appeal to worldwide audiences.

It has been largely responsible for the success of Netflix as a front-runner streaming company, demonstrating inclusivity as a viable and financially rewarding strategy.

5.5 The Future of DEI in Marketing

The future will find DEI still an integral element of marketing strategy. Brands have to keep improving by:

Fusing AI to Ad Free Bias: Creating AI models that get rid of ad targeting of algorithmic bias.

Broadening Representation Beyond Traditional Media: Leveraging new channels such as the metaverse to build diverse digital environments.

Building Ethical AI for Customer Interactions: Applying AI powered chatbots and recommendation systems that incorporate diversity in their outputs.

As companies adopt these approaches, they will not only be more competitive but also help create a fairer and more inclusive marketing environment.

6. Conclusion

In the constantly changing world of marketing, technology, ethics, and diversity converge to inform consumer experiences. While AI, big data, and immersive technologies open never-before-seen marketing possibilities, they also raise ethical concerns that brands need to navigate with sensitivity. Incorporating DEI principles in marketing approaches is vital to develop connected customer relationships and sustainable brand loyalty.

The latest trends like AI-based personalization and Block chain transparency have both opportunities and challenges. Marketers need to use technologies with ethical aspects like data privacy, fairness of algorithms and sustainability. Brands that achieve this balance will flourish in markets and drive a more transparent and sustainable digital landscape. Success stories of Patagonia, Apple and Nike have combined technology

with ethical practices of marketing. It is a trend and paradigmatic shift in doing business and interacting with its customers.

Finally, the future of marketing is not merely about embracing new technologies, but it is also about developing a dynamic environment where ethical values drive technological advancement. Both innovation and sustainability help the marketers to construct stronger and more resilient brands that serve the needs of consumers. Brands need to be ready to evolve with swiftly changing trends and consumer preferences. As the digital marketing ecosystem continues to develop, the firms that focus on ethical innovation will be the leaders in their respective domains. They will be more successful as far as revenue and market share is concerned. Overall, in a nutshell, in this Paper marketers can formulate responsible strategies for sustained success in the changing digital world.

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