



# Reaching the Growing LGBTQ Population with Thoughtful Advertising

## What marketers should know about this diverse population

A growing number of U.S. adults identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, or otherwise non-heterosexual and/or non-binary in their gender identity. These individuals, collectively referred to by acronyms such as LGBTQ and LGBTQIA+, have significant buying power as well as high expectations from brands they support. By delivering thoughtful messaging on the right platforms, brands can win their business.

# 01 Population

LGBTQ individuals make up 5.6% of the U.S. population.<sup>1</sup> As the culture evolves to be more understanding, accepting, and accommodating, younger Americans are becoming more likely to identify as LGBTQ. The oldest members of Gen Z, now in early adulthood, are **eight times more likely** than Baby Boomers to consider themselves part of the queer community.<sup>1</sup> Evidence shows that younger Gen Zers are even more likely to identify as non-straight or non-binary, with up to 31% of the generation identifying as LGBTQ.<sup>2</sup> This makes the LGBTQ community the fastest-growing U.S. consumer group, projected to grow by millions in the next few years.<sup>2</sup>

- TD

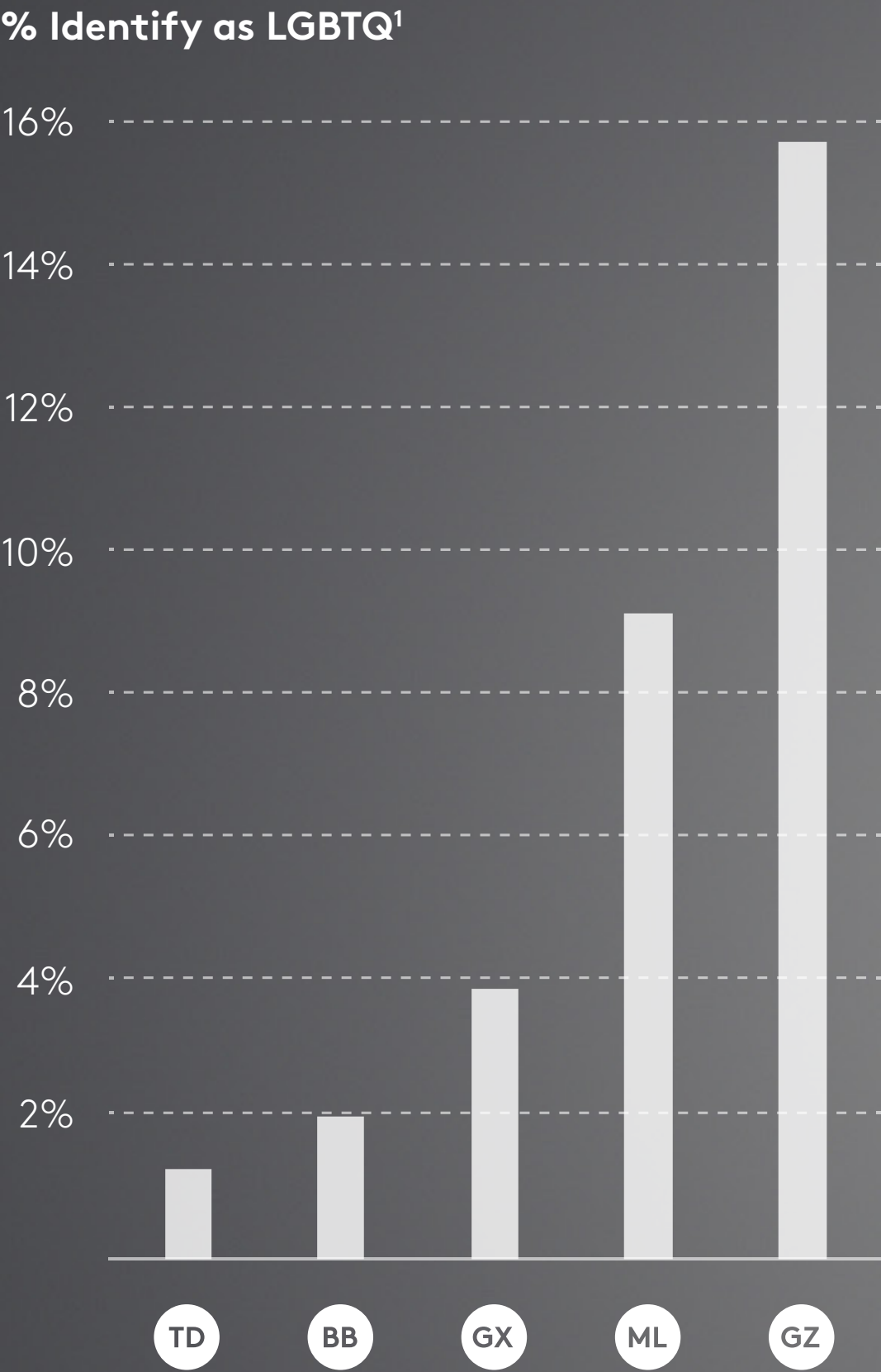
**Traditionalists**  
Born before 1946
- BB

**Baby Boomers**  
Born 1946-1964
- GX

**Gen X**  
Born 1965-1980
- ML

**Millennials**  
Born 1981-1996
- GZ

**Gen Z Adults**  
Born 1997-2002



## 02 Consumer Expectations

LGTBQ consumers have clear and high expectations of the brands they support: Brands trying to win their business need to be **authentically inclusive** of the entire community. Sarah Kate Ellis, President and CEO of LGBTQ advocacy organization GLAAD, summarized it this way:



**It is not enough to put a rainbow on a product and call it a marketing strategy. Brands need to take the initiative to reflect the world we live in by showcasing the wide range of diverse identities within the LGBTQ community. This includes transgender and non-binary people, as well as gay and lesbian parents with children. When a trans woman of color is represented in a commercial or ad, it builds understanding and sends a validating message to trans people everywhere.”<sup>3</sup>**





When companies succeed in  
inclusive outreach, it pays off.

Of U.S. LGBTQ individuals:<sup>4</sup>

**80%**

said brands that support LGBTQ equality  
“will get more of my business this year”

**73%**

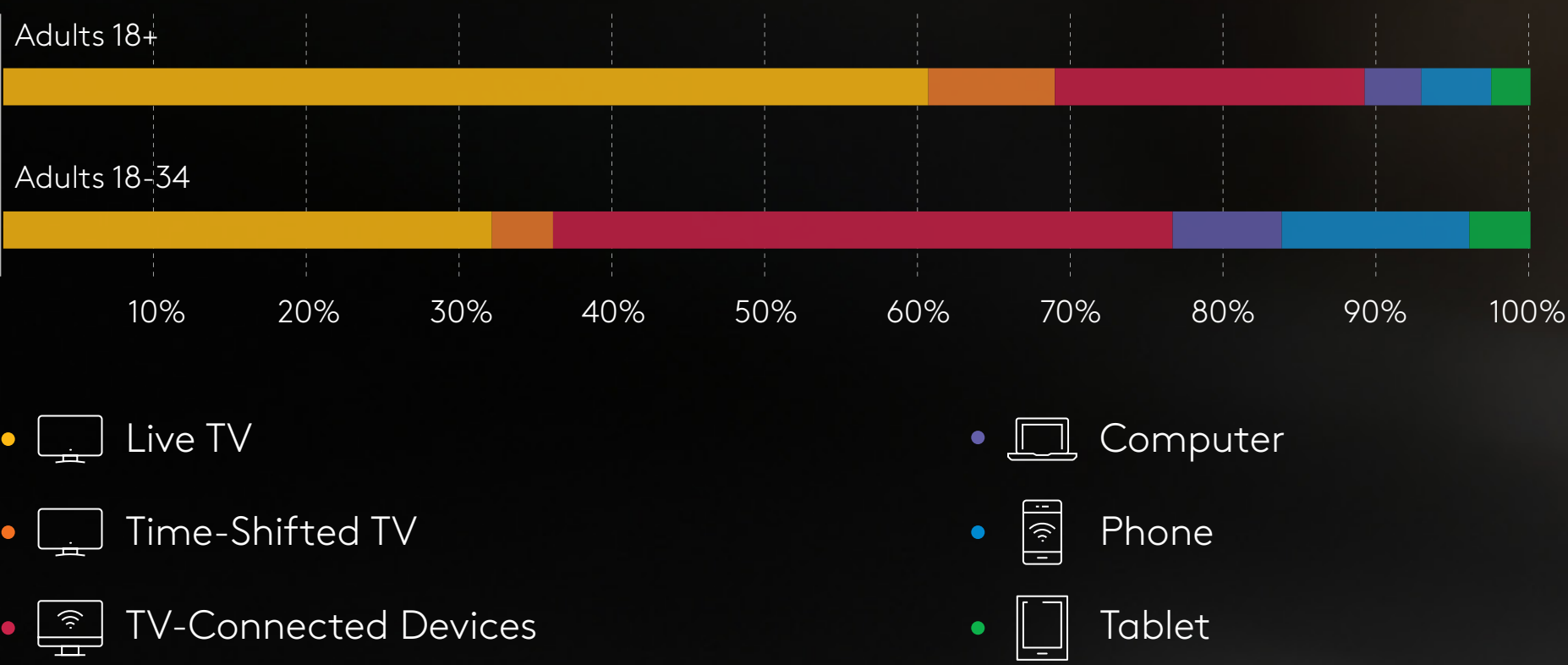
had made a purchase in the previous year  
at least partially driven by a company’s  
inclusive outreach, employment  
practices, or political stances

# 03 Viewership Trends

In addition to crafting the right message, advertisers also need to deliver their advertising on the platforms where potential customers spend their time. Adults who identify as LGBTQ are more likely than average to tune into these networks:<sup>5</sup>

MTV2	74% more likely	Nickelodeon	49% more likely
Cartoon Network	65% more likely	Freeform	67% more likely
VH1	62% more likely		

Because this group skews younger than the general population, they are also likely to spend a greater percentage of their media time with streaming content rather than live and time-shifted TV. These trends provide advertisers with valuable opportunities to reach this group through multiscreen TV and premium video content.



# 04 Key Takeaways

- 1. On average, people who identify as LGBTQ are younger than the general population.
- 2. They demand inclusive and representative marketing, and they reward brands that get it right.
- 3. Brands can effectively reach them in multiscreen TV content.

Sources:

1. Jones, Jeffrey M., "LGBT Identification Rises to 5.6% in Latest U.S. Estimate," Gallup, 24 Feb. 2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329708/lgbt-identification-rises-latest-estimate.aspx>.

2. Oakenfull, Gillian, "This Is The Marketing Moment Of Our Generation—Will You Check Boxes Or Act Boldly?" Forbes, 29 June 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gillianoakenfull/2020/06/29/this-is-the-marketing-moment-of-our-generationwill-you-check-boxes-or-act-boldly/?sh=3f7ba748425b>.

3. Zalis, Shelley, "Inclusive ads are affecting consumer behavior, according to new research," Think with Google, Nov. 2019, <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/future-of-marketing/management-and-culture/diversity-and-inclusion/thought-leadership-marketing-diversity-inclusion/>.

4. O'Hara, Mary Emily, "What Marketers Need to Know About the LGBTQ Community in 2020," Adweek, 8 July 2020, <https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/lgbtq-community-survey-2020-results-marketing-data/>.

5. Scarborough mosaic data. Adults 18+ identifying as bisexual, gay, lesbian, LGBTQ+, transgender, gender non-conforming, or unsure or questioning. July 2019-Sept. 2020.

6. Nielsen Total Audience Report, March 2021.







