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**DO GOOD.**

# From Rainbow Capitalism to Allyship

Five steps to sustain support and avoid pulling back

## THE TAKEAWAY

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(You can read the full article [here](#).)

Allyship. With the backlash against Target coming on the heels of the Anheuser-Bush, Bud Light-Dylan Mulvaney fiasco, Pride 2023 presents a perfect moment for business leaders to reflect on what allyship, DEI and belonging genuinely mean to them, both externally with customers, investors and other stakeholders and internally with employees.

Specifically with respect to Pride, is your allyship about more than waving a rainbow logo and a commercial focus? Does your brand – or the human face of your business with which people form a relationship – have an intention-action gap when it comes to LGBTQ?

Taking a stand is a filter of sorts for all of a brand's actions and behaviors – not a one-time campaign, month-long event or, perhaps most importantly, reversible decision.... The lasting change that allyship is meant to cultivate comes from collaboration and sustained advocacy.

So what can brand leaders practically do? Here are 5 steps for brand leaders to stay the course that allyship demands:

1. **Unite brand and communications leaders across often siloed functions** of marketing, public relations, investor relations, government affairs and HR **to develop a system-wide perspective and unified view of key constituents** (customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders) and their expectations for your brand.
2. **Audit values, key messages and policies, operating procedures and other guidelines to ensure words and behaviors align** and where they don't identify ways to **close intention-action gaps**. (Be certain to include a review of positions/voting records of candidates you've donated to. Many brands "supporting" LGBTQ+ community have been called out for donating to anti-gay politicians.)
3. **Scenario plan possible reactions among key constituents** for all programs, campaigns and other initiatives and **assess the risk of potential outcomes**. Be sure to think twice about the audiences you are targeting and the language you are using. In today's climate, anything might be political risk!
4. **Know where the C-suite and your board stand on issues** and use this information as a filter in scenario planning. (A number of brand and sustainability leaders have confidentially told me how they had to stop a campaign because one or two directors had a different take on an issue.) It's essential that **executive leadership and board directors "defend" actions, rather than take a reversed position and blame middle management**.
5. Consider doing **research outside your echo chamber and target audience** – among people with lifestyles and opinions that are the "opposite" of your target customers. **Understanding their read on things will help you to scenario plan and prepare for unexpected outcomes**.

To learn more about preventing rainbow capitalism and pinkwashing, arrange a training session or get support scenario planning and integrating allyship into brand development and organizational culture, [please reach out](#).