

Pride is not an ad

Brands, Pride & Advertising | Survey Results

August 2024

PUBLICIS / BOOMERANG

Brands, Pride & Advertising

Survey Results:

Public and Industry Sentiment
Towards Present Day LGBTQ+ Brand
Marketing Efforts

August 2024

#prideisnotanad

PINAA

Hello, we are ~~PINAA~~ 🙌

PINAA is the queer employee resource group of Publicis NL and Boomerang Agency which stands for Pride Is Not An Ad. As the name implies, we're fighting against rainbow capitalism. We want to help you become better equipped and for your brand to be representative of our changing world -- a world which embraces diversity that is increasingly encompassing a variety of ages, races, sexualities, genders, disabilities, and the intersectionality of all those things.

We spend much of our time investigating how marketing professionals can bring inclusivity into their strategies and are continuously analyzing media, and the advertising industry, to understand what makes a successful LGBTQ+ campaign. We're committed to helping others learn from these efforts and we look forward to helping you walk away with a variety of solutions and ways to consider supporting the LGBTQ+ community, both online and offline!

About the research



Backlash in recent years against brands and the commercialization of Pride, pinkwashing, and societal polarization leading to 'anti-woke' sentiments, has sparked a heated debate in our society.

In the Netherlands, we face a particularly unique context where the newly elected (far) right-wing cabinet appears intent on undoing the human rights progress of the LGBTQ+ community while research among secondary school students seems to indicate a regression in attitudes towards same-sex marriage.

This led us to the realization that *conversation* and *education* need to become even more important pillars of our movement. Therefore we conducted (2) surveys to ask people about brands, pride, and advertising.

The first survey was conducted with the general population across the Netherlands while the second survey was targeted directly to our peers in the Dutch advertising, marketing, and media industry about their sentiment towards inclusivity in their marketing strategies today.

Let's dive in!

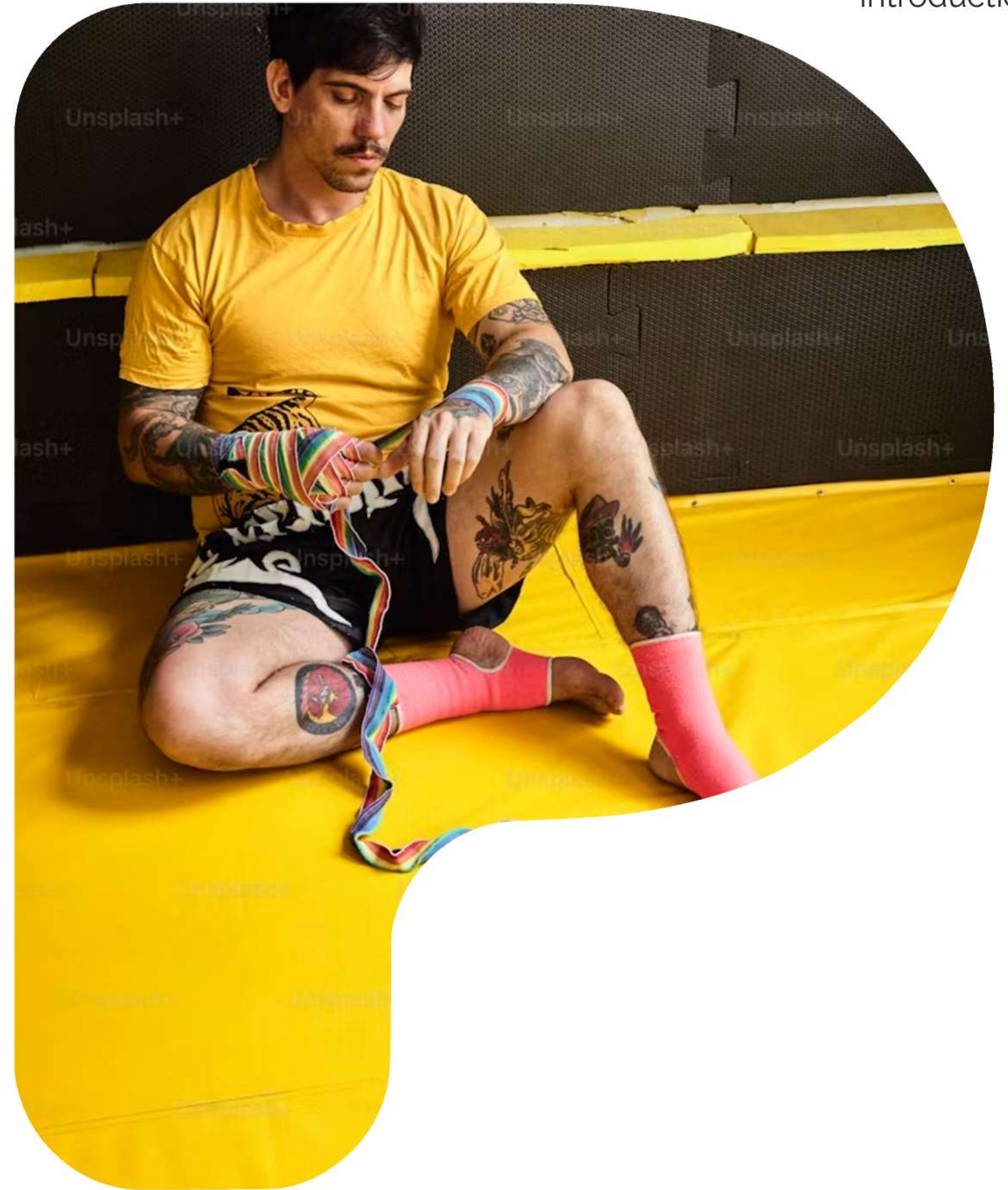


Photo by Natalia Blauth on Unsplash

Survey #1

What does the general Dutch population think about brands joining Pride?

Methodology

Survey method:

Online Survey

Geographical coverage:

The Netherlands

Field timing:

June 2024

Screening criteria:

General Dutch Population

Base size:

N=200

Age range:

16-75 years old

45% Male,

55% Female,

0% Other

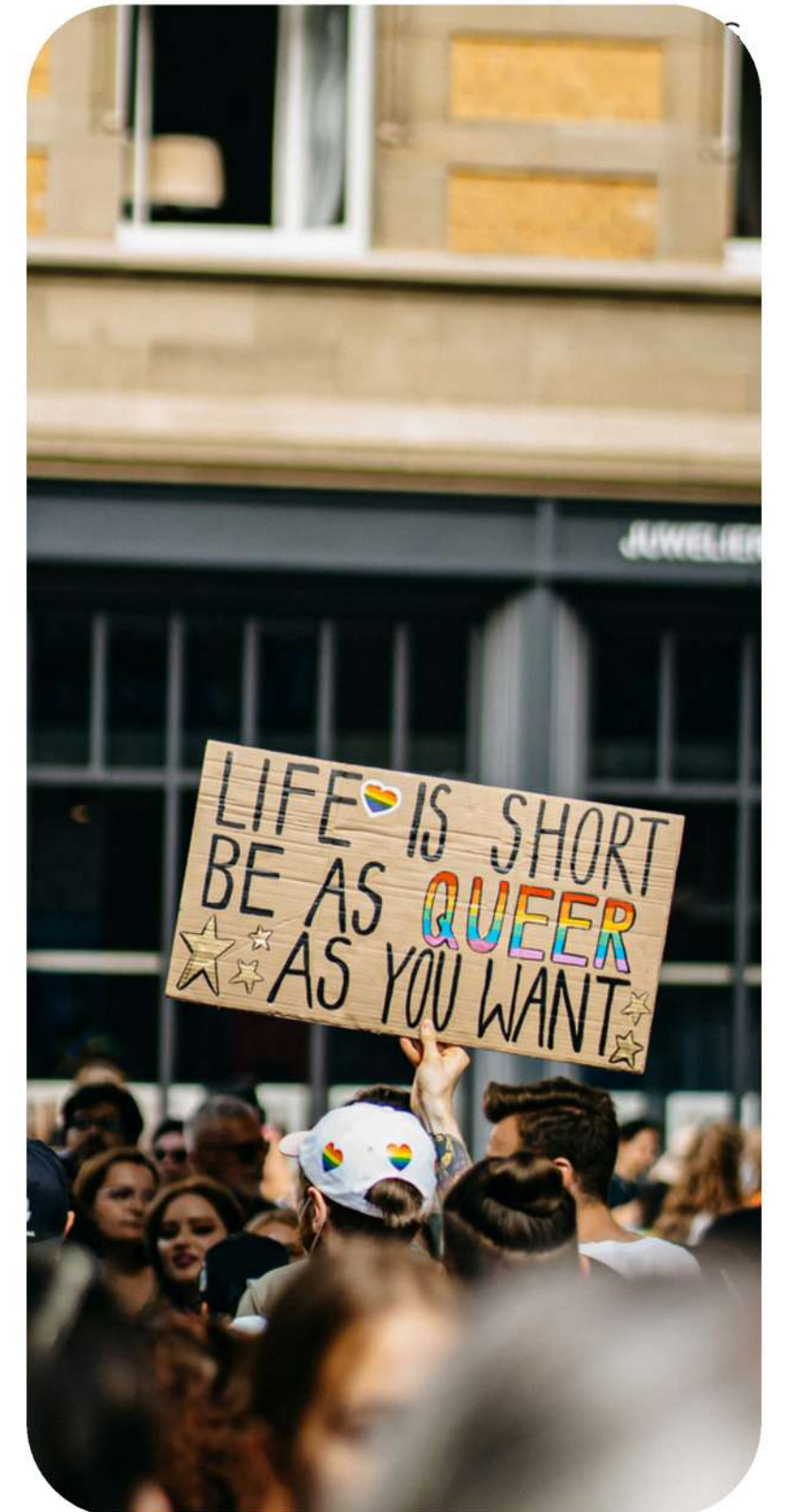


Photo by Raphael Renter on Unsplash

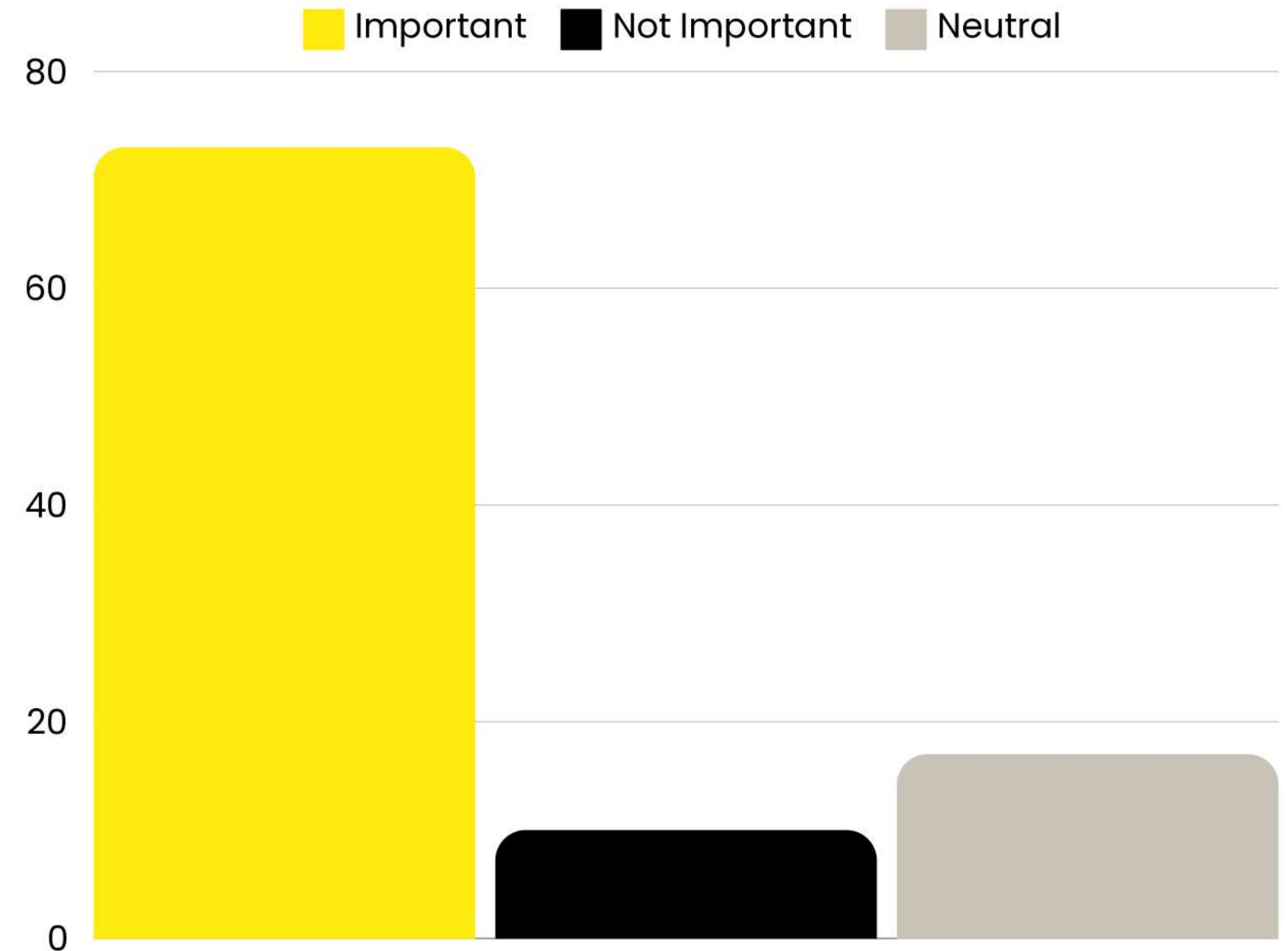
Survey #1

THE DUTCH CALL FOR ACTION

LGBTQ+ acceptance is highly important to respondents from the general population

The majority of Dutch people recognize the importance of supporting the LGBTQ+ community, with 73% valuing greater acceptance in society and 57% believing brands should actively support LGBTQ+ people.

This sentiment is heightened by increasing polarization, emphasizing the growing relevance of inclusive marketing and media strategies.



“How important is it for Dutch society to pay more attention to the acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community”

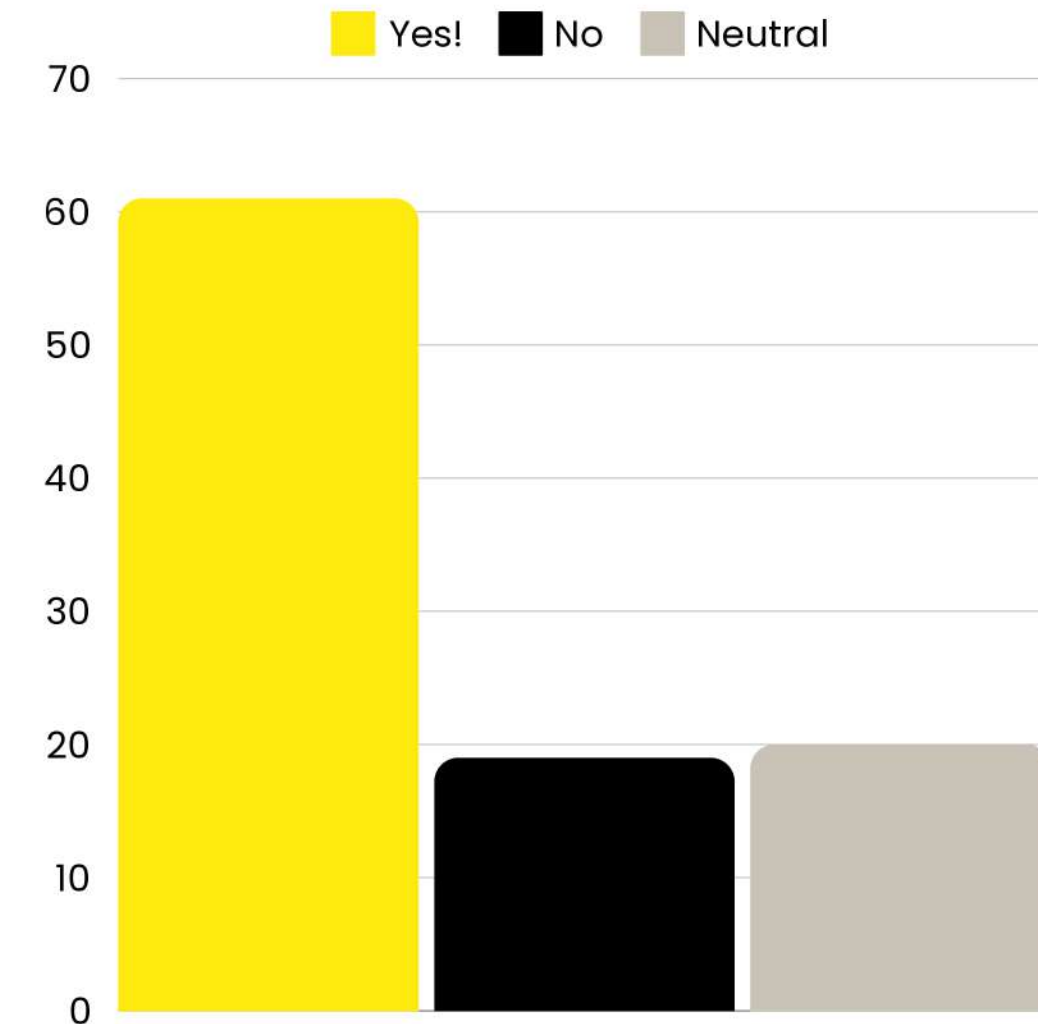
Survey #1

INCLUSION IN MARKETING STRATEGY MATTERS

Including LGBTQ+ in advertising is seen as having positive impact for society

A significant **61%** of Dutch people believe that **including the LGBTQ+ community in advertising positively impacts societal acceptance.**

With the average estimate suggesting that **28%** of the population identifies as LGBTQ+, it highlights both the perceived prevalence and the importance of inclusive marketing in fostering broader social acceptance.



"Including the LGBTQ+ community in advertising helps improve acceptance of the community"

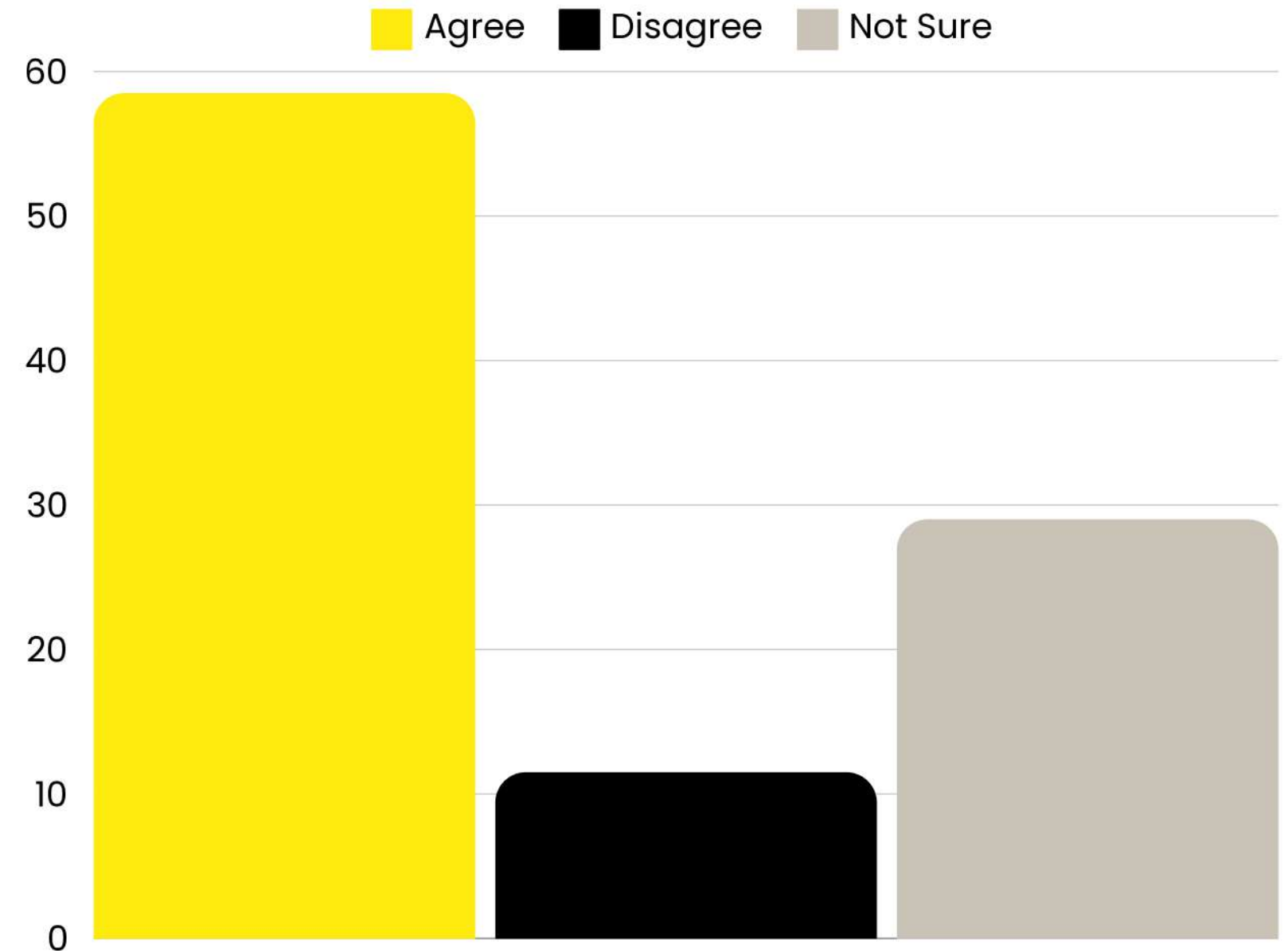
Survey #1

CURRENT PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Majority of respondents call *bullsh*t* on most LGBTQ+ inclusive campaigns

A majority of 58.5% of Dutch people believe that brands often use LGBTQ+ individuals in marketing primarily to boost their image, indicating that they **recognize LGBTQ+ tokenism within brand campaigns**. This scepticism about the authenticity of inclusive campaigns is fueling perceptions of Rainbow Washing.

Only 11.5% disagree, suggesting that skepticism toward the authenticity of such marketing efforts is widespread.



"Brands primarily use LGBTQ+ individuals in their marketing to enhance their brand image."

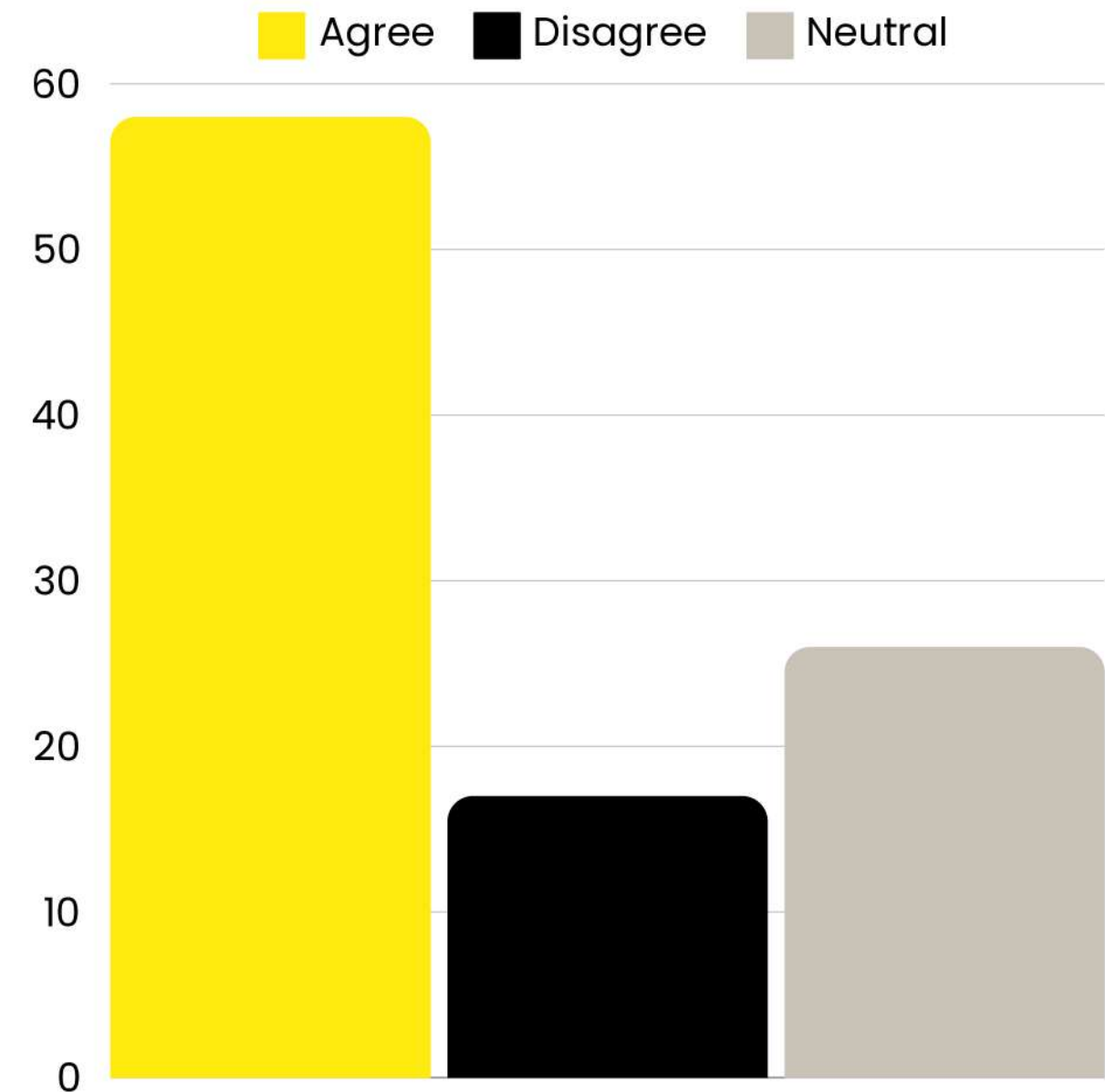
Survey #1

CONVERTING ADS INTO ACTION

'Put your money where your mouth is!'

A substantial **57.5%** of Dutch people believe that brands launching Pride campaigns should actively support the LGBTQ+ community. This highlights a strong sentiment that **brands should convert their Pride campaigns into meaningful action, beyond just advertising.**

Additionally, **39%** believe that a portion of proceeds from such campaigns should be donated to LGBTQI organizations, reinforcing the expectation that brands back their messages with tangible support.



If a brand launches a Pride campaign, they should also do something for the LGBTQ+ community

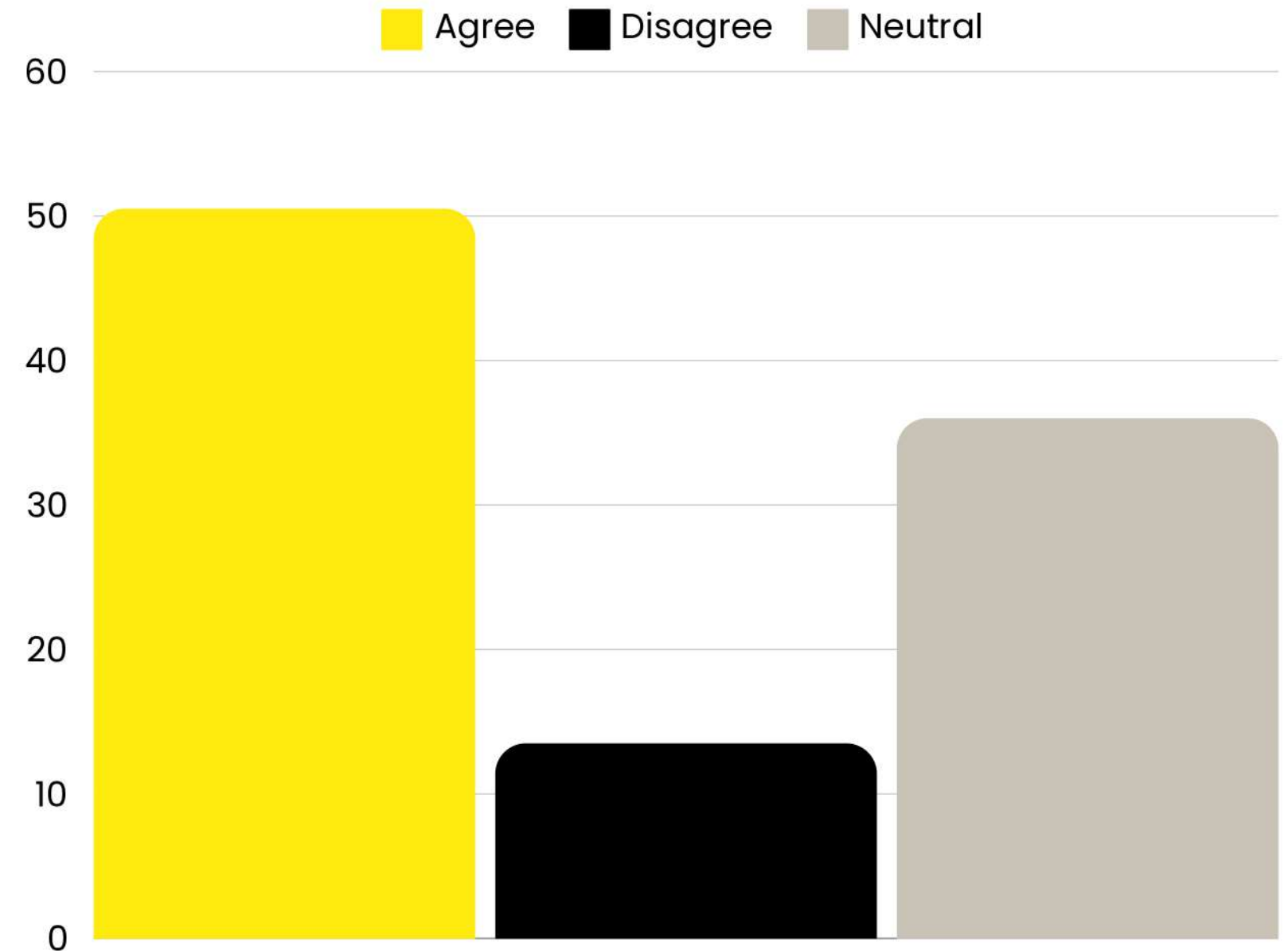
Survey #1

CALCULATING BUSINESS RISK IN THE FACE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

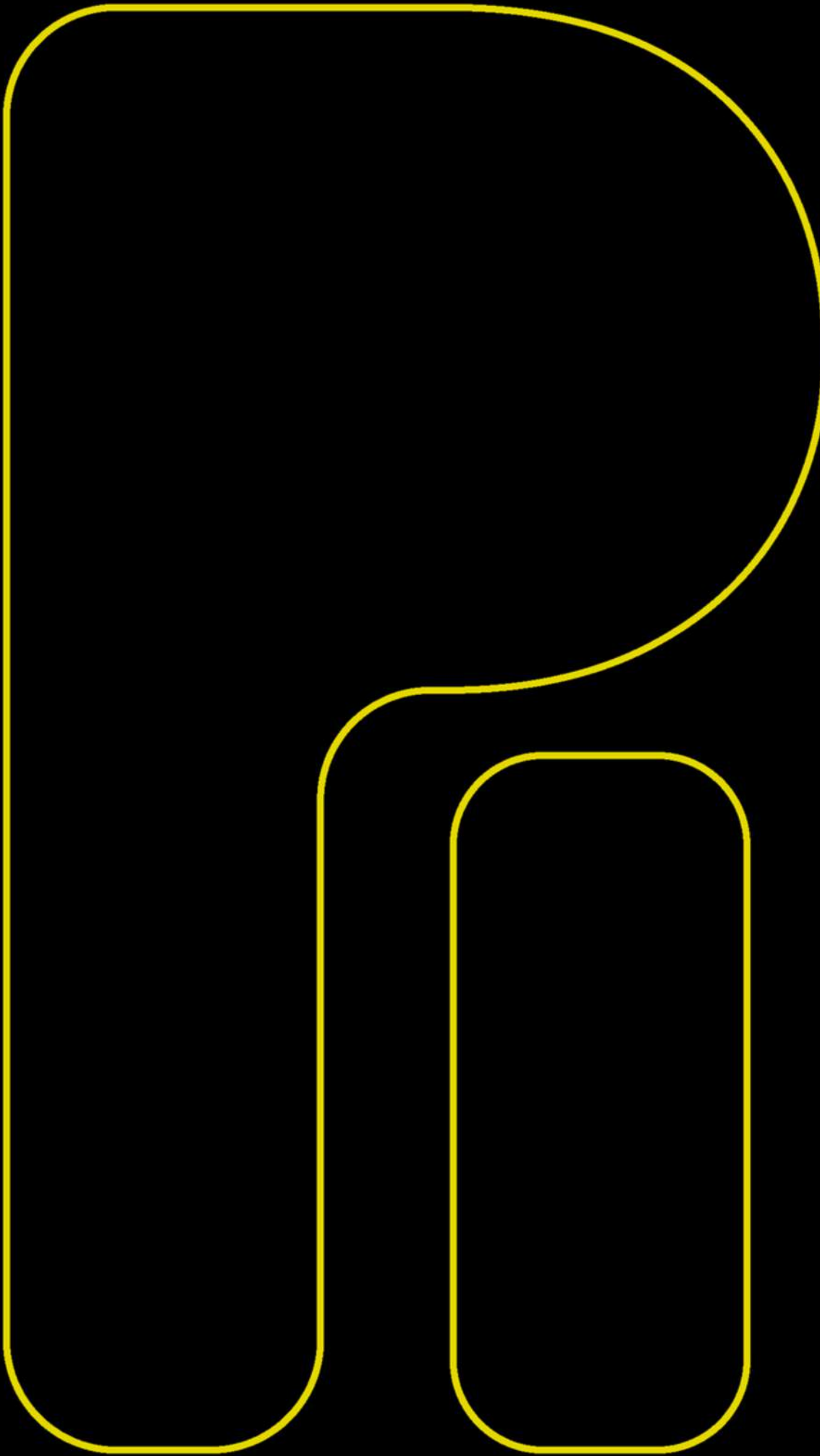
Only 13.5% think brands being openly inclusive is a bad move.

Despite 13.5% having a negative sentiment towards brands that openly support the LGBTQ+ community in their advertising, a staggering 86,5% view it as a positive standpoint or remain neutral.

This suggests that fears of resistance may be amplified by a vocal minority. In fact, brands have more support than they might realize, highlighting the potential benefits of standing firm in their inclusive efforts.

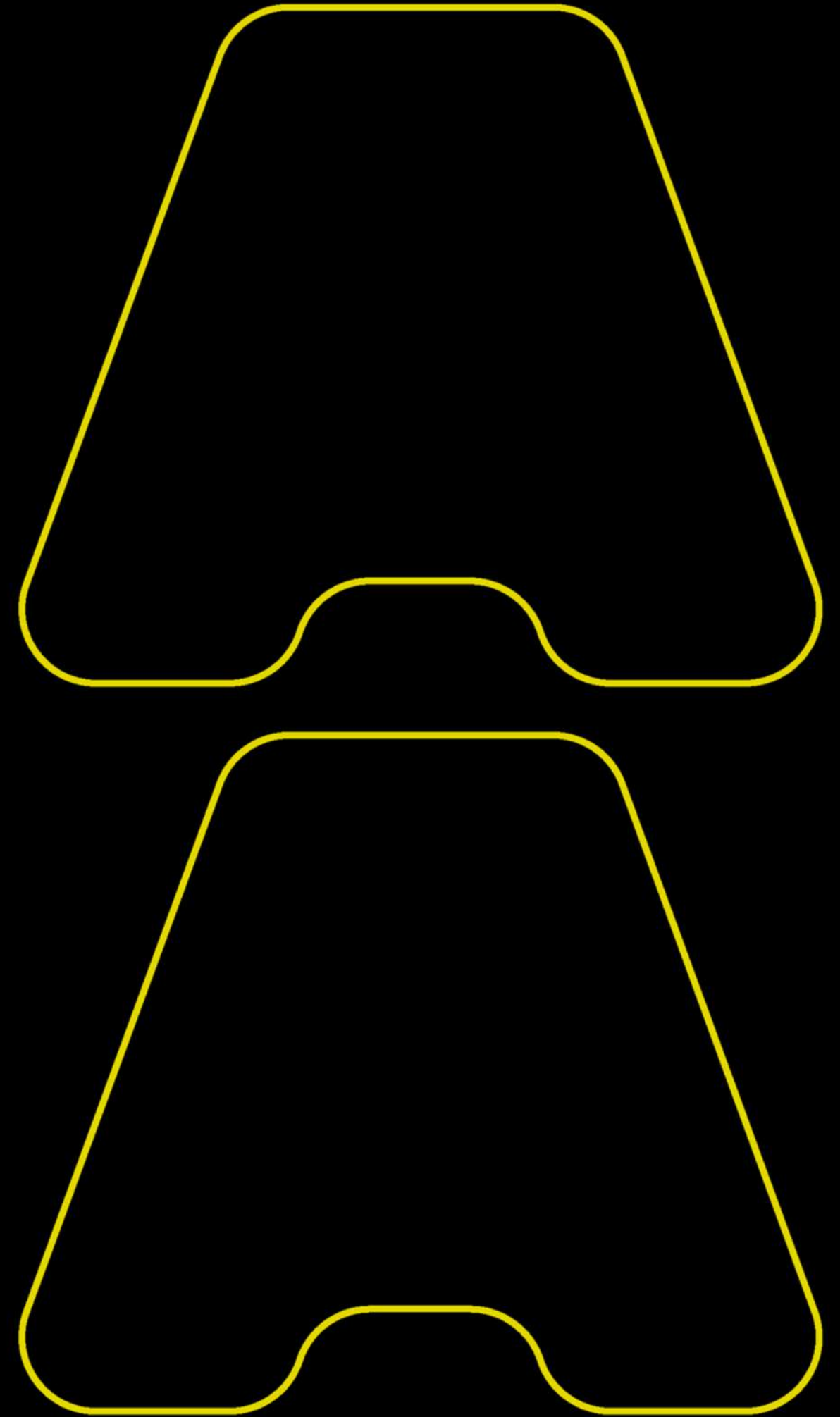


it's good when brands are openly inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community in advertising campaigns



"There's a lot of options to buy ice cream out there. But we're an ice cream company that has a certain set of values that we try to use our business to bring to life. And I think for those people who don't like it, there's plenty of other options."

Jay Curley,
Ben & Jerry's Global Head
of Integrated Marketing



Survey #2

How are Dutch advertising, Media & Marketing Professionals involved in LGBTQ+ issues?

Methodology

Survey method:

Online Survey

Geographical coverage:

Mostly greater Amsterdam

Field timing:

June 1 – July 1 2024

Screening criteria:

Self identify as agency or brand professionals

Base size:

N=54

69% Agency, 31% Brand

13% Identifies as LGBTQ+

Age range:

28-58 (avg. 43 years old)



Photo by Meg Aghamyan on Unsplash

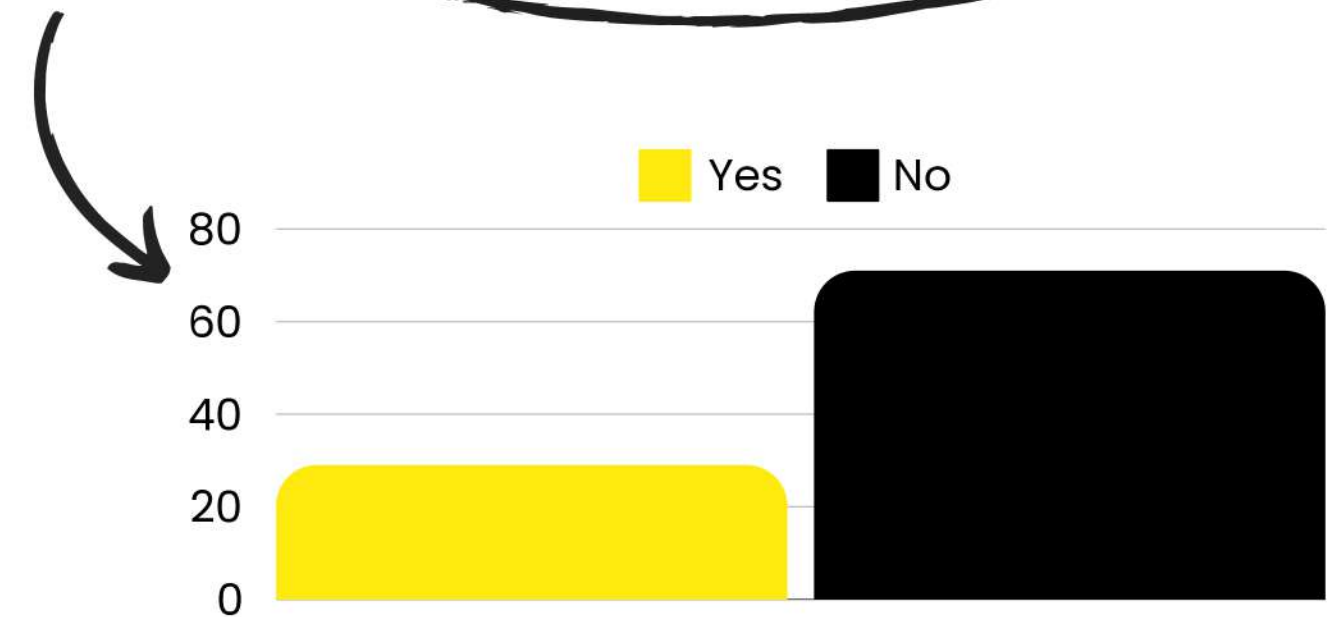
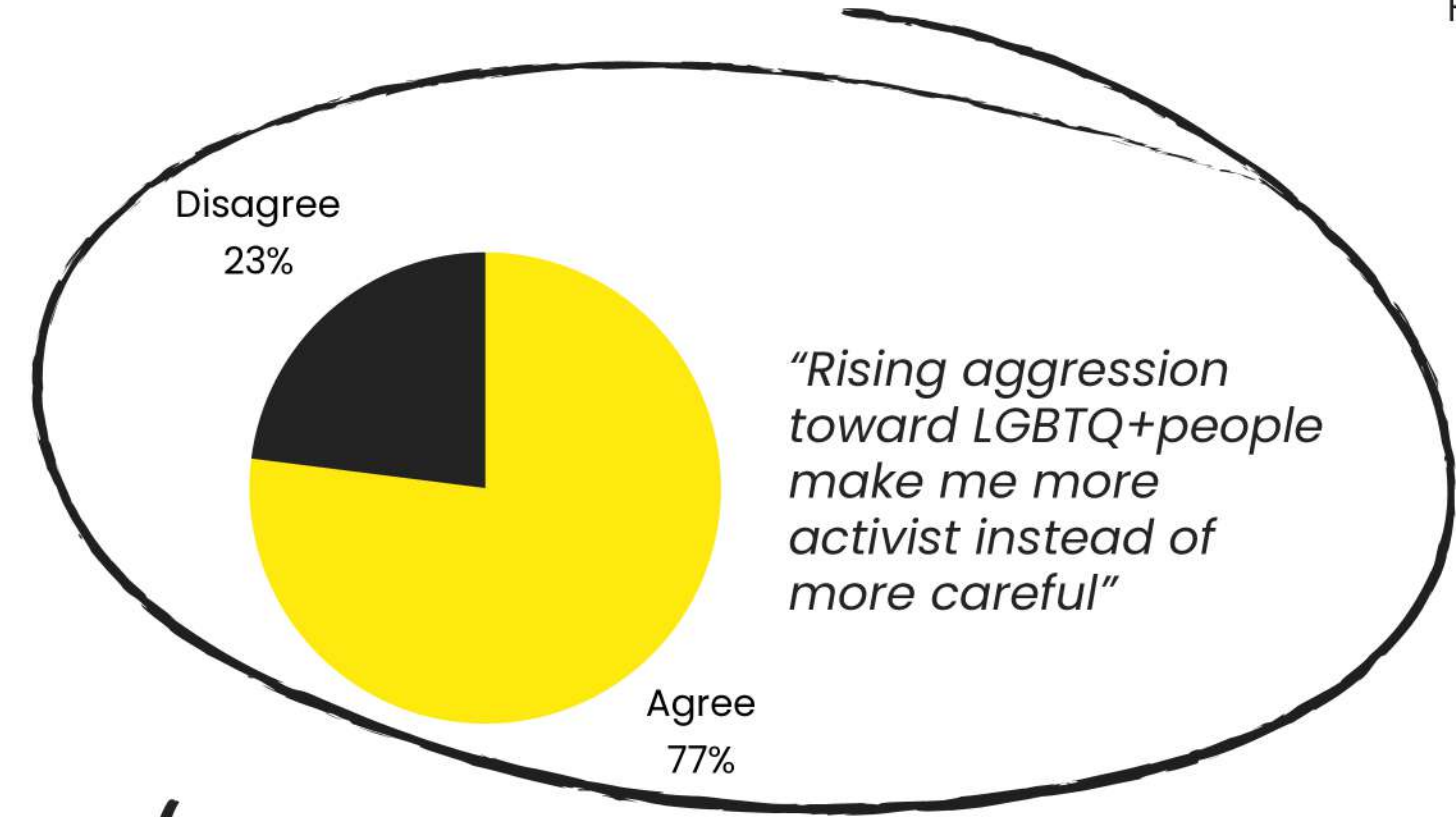
Survey #2

VALUE-ACTION GAP

Marketing professionals are admittedly insecure about their knowledge & capability around LGTBTQ+ topics

While 77% of professionals are increasingly motivated to support the LGBTQ+ community in response to rising aggression, there is a notable gap between their willingness to act and their confidence in doing so effectively. Despite this strong activist intent, only 39% feel knowledgeable about the TQ+ aspects of LGBTQ+, and 69% believe that agencies lack sufficient understanding.

This highlights a potential value-action gap driven by inadequate DEI representation and knowledge within the industry.



"Do you have enough trust, in your own level of knowledge when applying this topic into marketing and media strategies?"

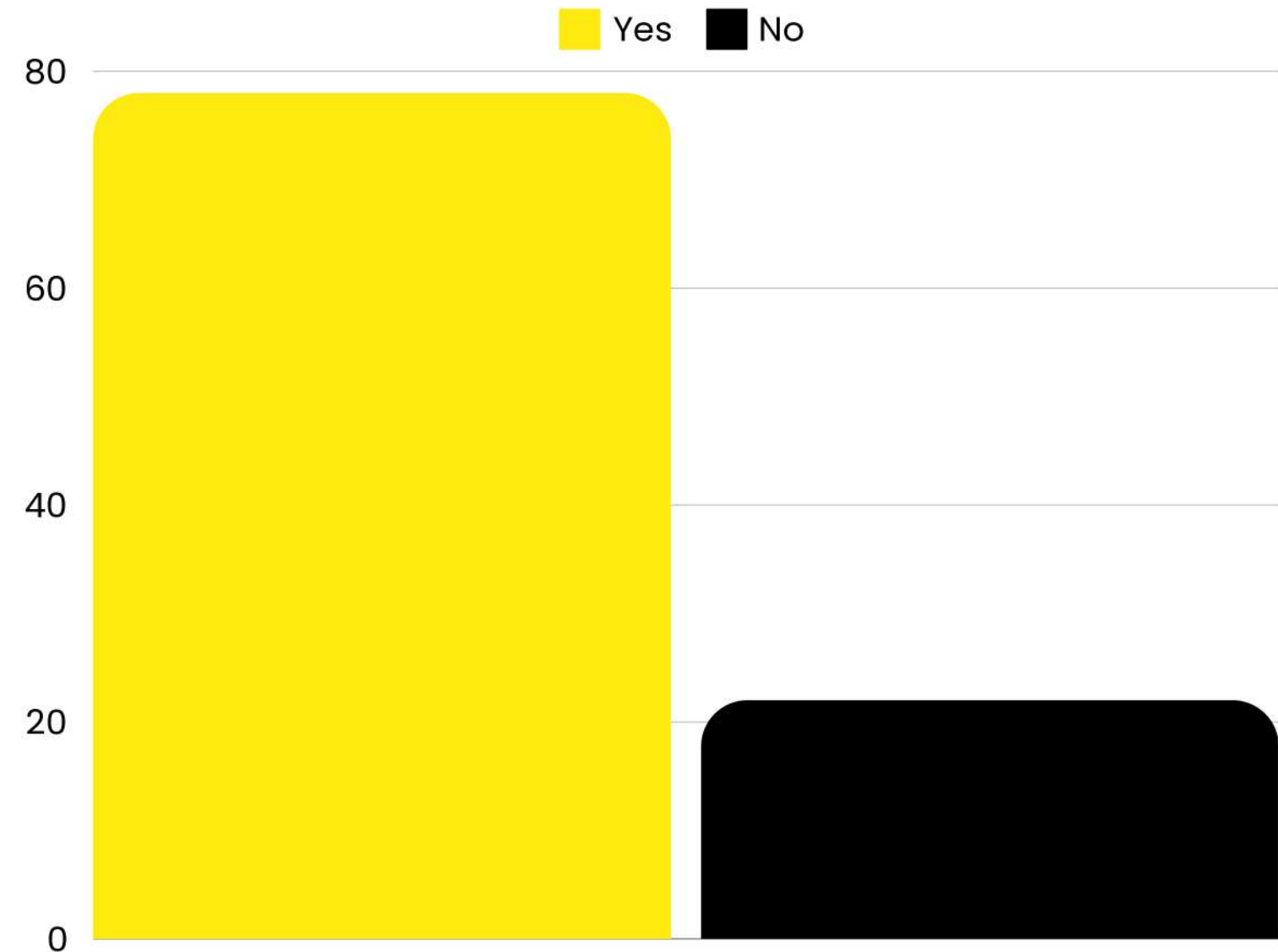
Survey #2

PRIDE AND BEYOND

Inclusion remains a structural part of brand strategy beyond Pride

A strong majority of professionals **(63%)** believe it's important for brands to include LGBTQ+ representation in their campaigns, with **76%** agreeing that it fosters greater acceptance. **55%** of marketing teams consider LGBTQ+ inclusion a structural part of their brand strategy. Of this **55%**, a majority of **78%** says LGBTQ+ inclusive efforts extend beyond just Pride-related campaigns

It's important to note that we need inclusivity, not just in front, but behind the cameras as well. Brands are expanding their LGBTQ+ efforts outside of Pride month, which is a step in the right direction. Let's stay critical; is it true inclusion or tokenism?



"Our LGBTQ+ inclusive campaigns are continuous and not confined to the Pride period alone"

Survey #2

INCLUSION VS EQUITY

Marketing teams are still centered around generic LGBTQ+ support

Most professionals (84%) opt for broad, general support of the LGBTQ+ community in their marketing efforts, with 58% favoring generic messages over tackling specific issues faced by segments of the community.

This suggests a preference for inclusivity at a high level rather than addressing targeted challenges within the LGBTQ+ population.



Choose which type of support you provide for LGBTQ+ community

Conclusion

Preliminary results shed light on the influence of LGBTQ+ inclusion in advertising and its role in shaping society and advancing fundamental human rights.

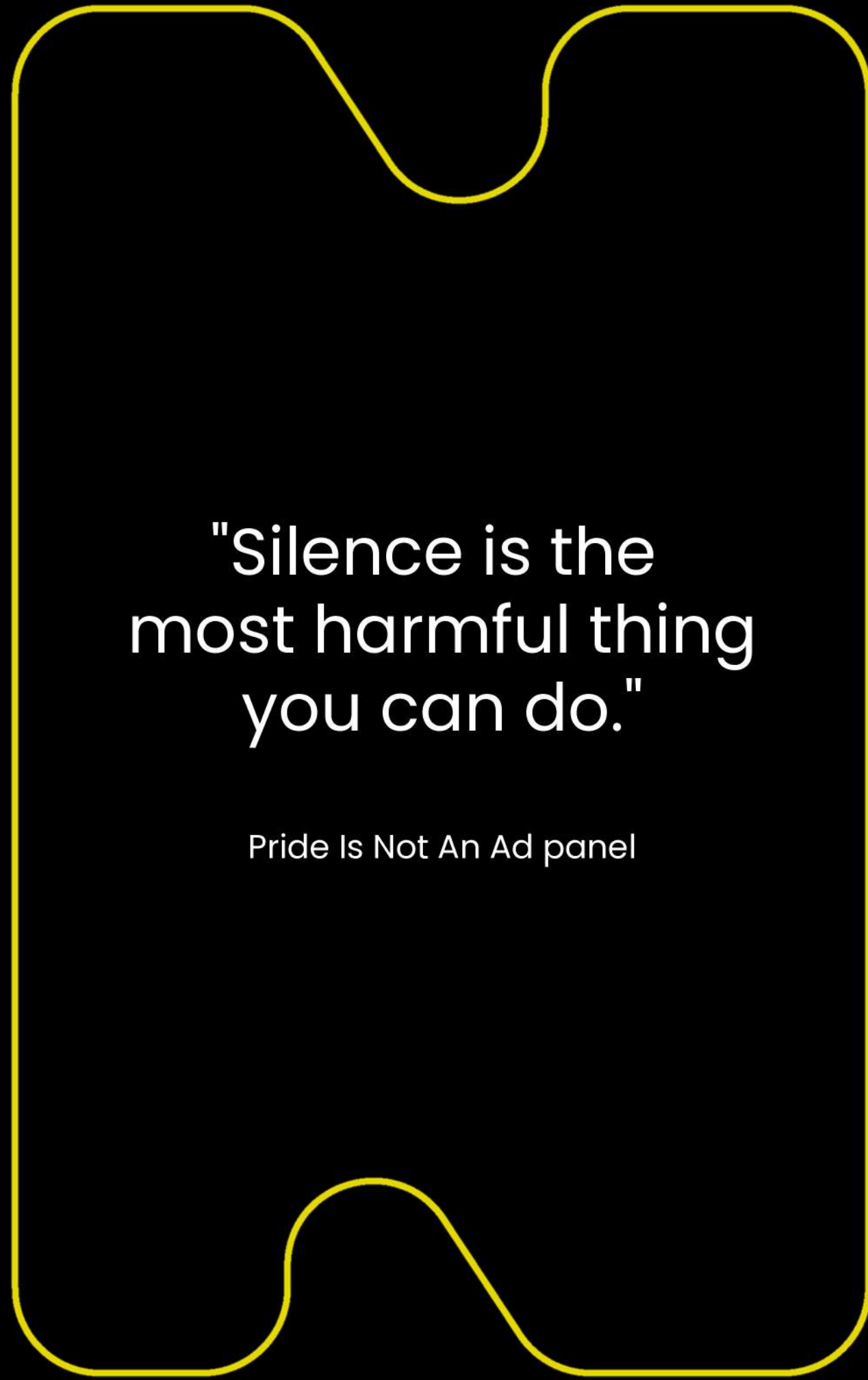
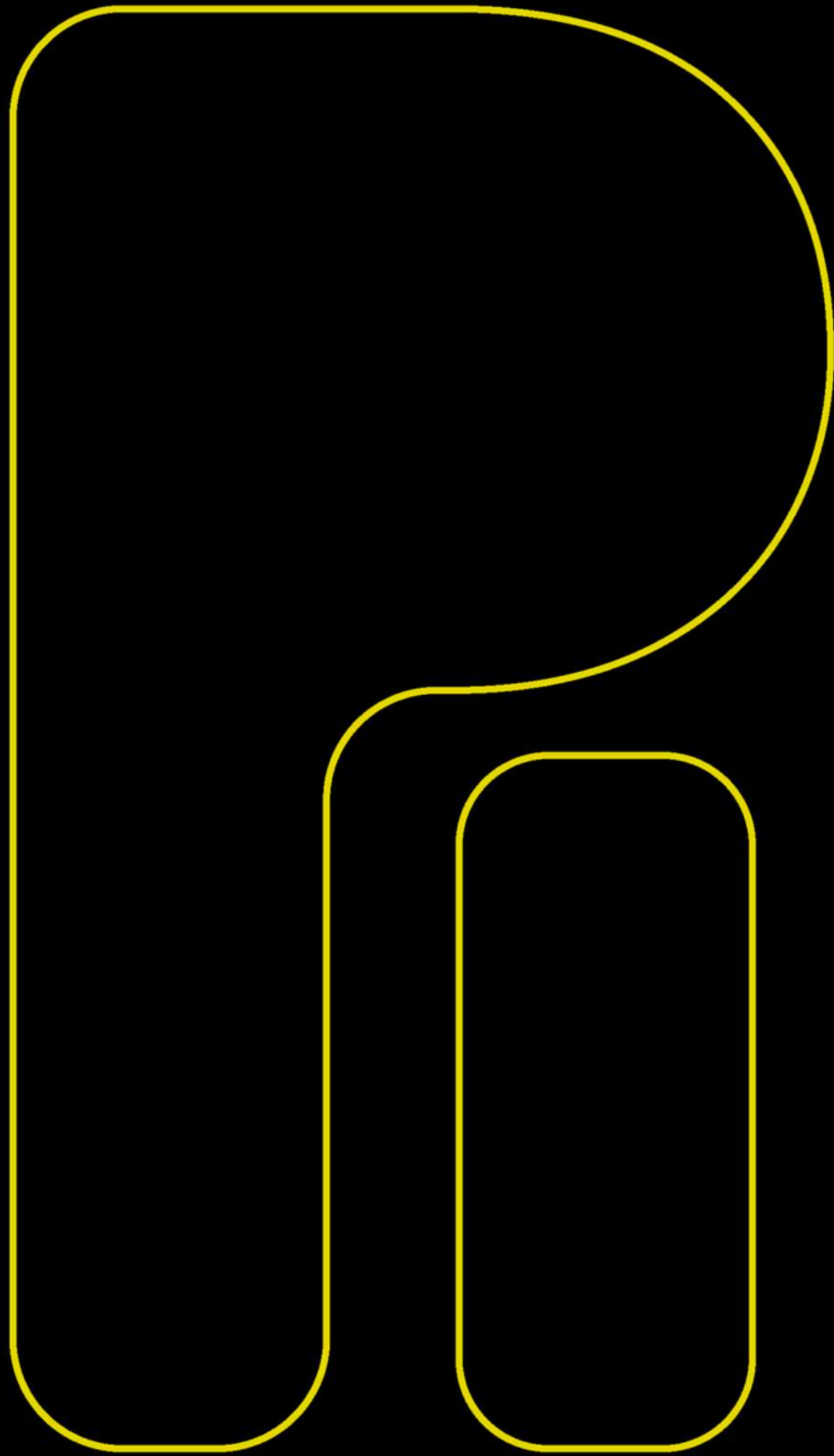
However, while there's a strong desire within marketing teams to strengthen their support, the lack of close ties to the community compounded by insufficient knowledge about current LGBTQ+ human rights issues seem to be only perpetuating generalizations, pinkwashing, and negative perceptions from consumers and the community.

This research highlights where the industry currently stands in its maturity in the face of growing "anti-woke" movements and regressive sentiments towards same sex love.

Our desire to move beyond tokenistic representation tactics and superficial inclusion strategies mean marketing teams and their creative counterparts will need to innovate how they learn and how they engage their employees.

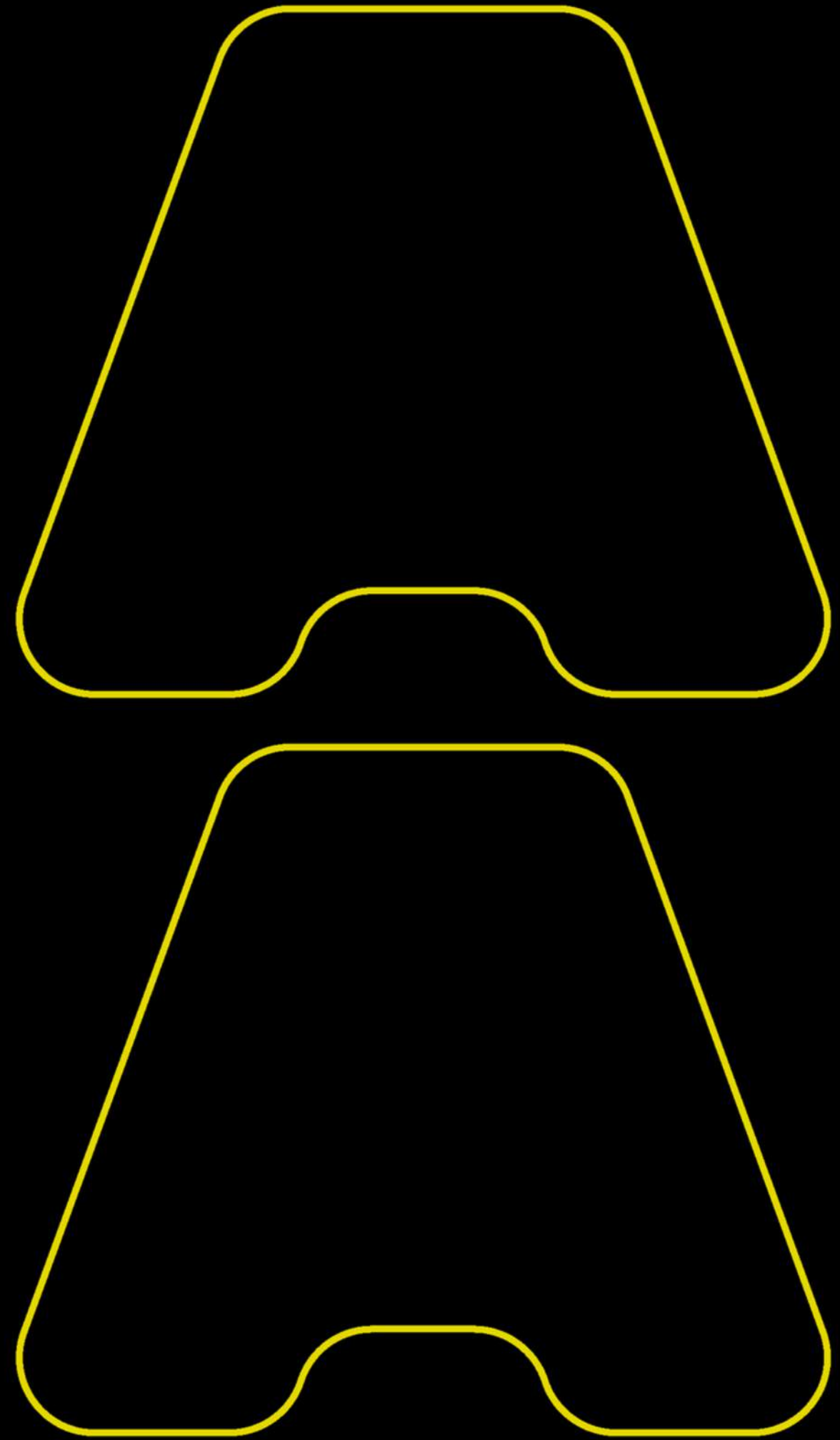
Employees are eager to act but support is needed outside of the campaign cycle. Advancing a culture of learning and leaning into community ties and engagement with local LGBTQ+ groups, colleagues, and even family & friends are all critical to advancing empathy, understanding, capabilities, and bravery.

Better inclusivity is remaining curious, a result of better knowledge and bravery.



"Silence is the
most harmful thing
you can do."

Pride Is Not An Ad panel



PINAA **ADsterdam panel**

Taking our research further at the second edition of ADsterdam festival for creativity held July 5th, we hosted a dynamic panel exploring the intersection of brands, Pride, and advertising.

Led by Maxine Penney (DJ/Songwriter, Cultural Events & Workshops) as the moderator, with an introduction by Marc Pieterse (Pride Is Not An Ad team), featuring panelists Maartje Weijers (Milkshake Festival), Steph Morrow (Studio Worrom), Rocio Sanchez (Marketing by Rocio), Jan-Willem Vosmeer (Heineken, Global Manager Sustainability), and Alfred Verhoeven (Marketing The Rainbow).

The panel not only shared their professional insights but also opened up about their personal journeys in front of our audience of marketing professionals on the main stage. A heartfelt thank you to them for emphasizing the importance of looking beyond the 'business side of social issues' and for sharing their personal experiences and best practices.



So, what's next?

Well, there's much more to come. As we've seen, there's a clear desire to further our collective knowledge, capabilities, and bravery in supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion and for brands to discover more ways to prove and innovate on their commitments.

As we continue to elevate these conversations, we're committed to bringing our research to new audiences, sharing it on stages, and contextualise it in new ways in order to drive meaningful change across industries.

Knowledge is key so if you don't know where to start, please contact us. Our goal is to collaborate in order to ensure our findings are useful and insights are actionable.

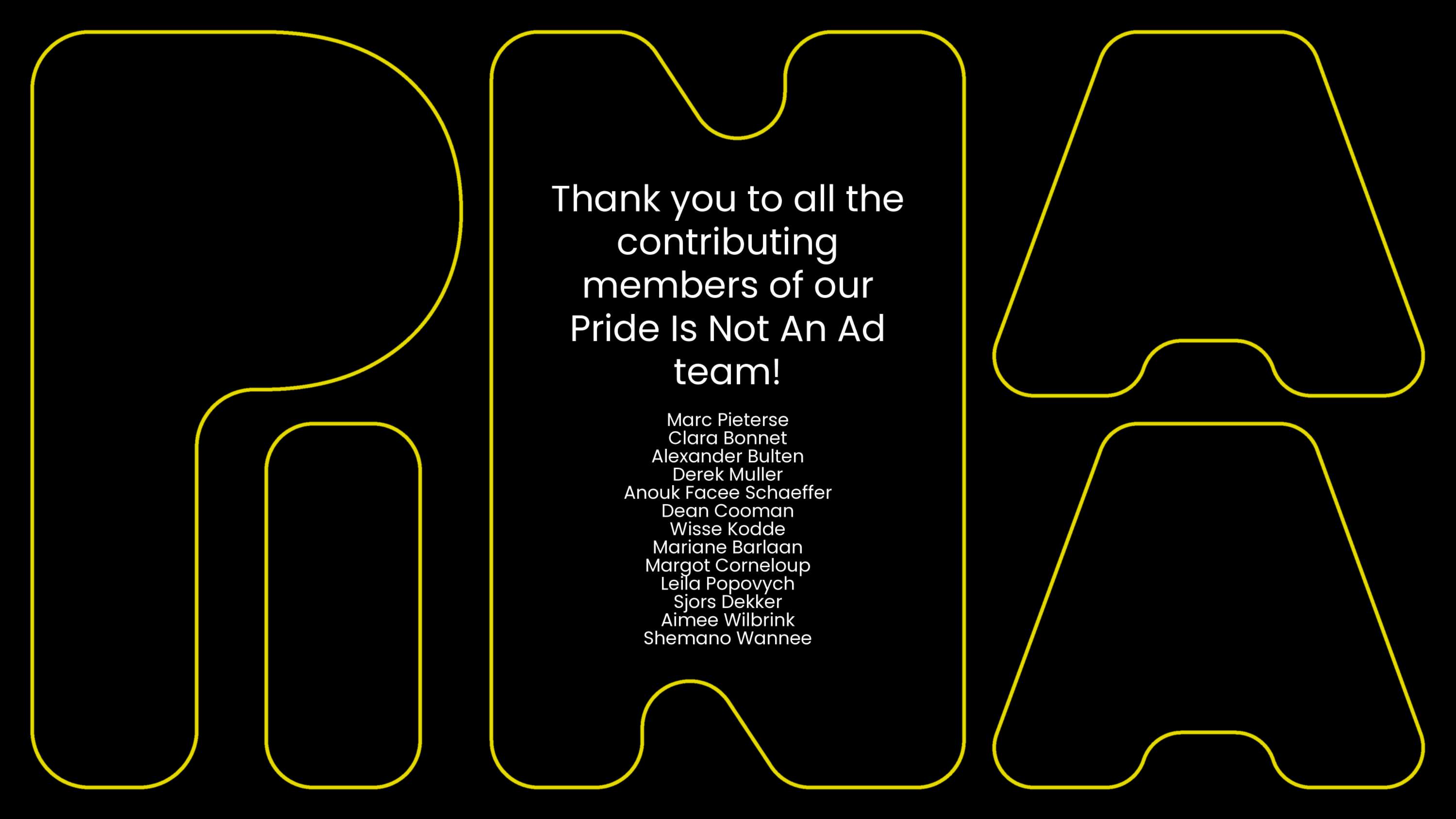
Do you have questions about the survey or want to learn from these efforts to understand solutions and ways to better support the LGBTQ+ community, both online and offline?



Photo by [Peyman Shojaei](#) on Unsplash

Let's collaborate! Contact us:

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Thank you to all the
contributing
members of our
Pride Is Not An Ad
team!

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