



Ellie Angell: Happy Pride – really? People, brands, and businesses can be more nuanced



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Angell is heading back to the UK this year. "For the first time in my life, I feel fear about being there. Fear of walking the streets, of going into pubs, of using the restroom."

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By Ellie Angell, business director at TrinityP3

It is Pride Month. And I am very much on the rainbow. But personally, I'm not a big fan of the phrase 'Happy Pride!' Particularly when it is used in proclamatory posts, adverts or statements from businesses.

There, I said it. While I have complete respect for everyone's right to feel celebratory and to mark the month as they choose, while I accept the importance gained by visibility, to me, Pride is much more about commemoration and taking stock.

Pride didn't start happy

The origins of Pride Month, as many of you will know, are based in protest and violence. The Stonewall Uprising involved riots against the police in defiance of a police raid of the Stonewall Inn in New York. A year later, the first Pride marches took place.

Stonewall happened during June 1969 and it came to represent a defining moment that continues to be marked in Pride Month around the world.

But is there much to celebrate? Have we moved forward in acceptance and equality in the intervening years? Well, yes and no. Of course, huge steps have been made. Legalisation of gay marriage. The rights of gay couples to adopt children. Gender recognition and the removal of barriers to gender-affirming care. Increased freedoms to just be. If, that is, you're living in the right part of the world.

One step forward, one step back

And yet, at the same time, we move backwards. The definition of 'living in the right part of the world' feels like it is shrinking. The efforts of the US and the UK, as two supposedly progressive first-world western nations, to roll back (to take just one example) trans rights, are truly alarming.

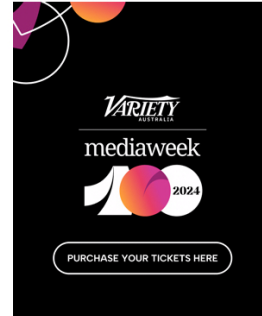
On the other side of the world (figuratively, if not literally) the Ugandan anti-homosexuality bill, passed in 2023 and upheld in 2024, proves that criminalisation of people's right to self-expression is still alive and well in that nation and in many other hugely populous parts of the world.

And then, there's the violence. Google 'homophobic violence rise' for a list of reports, studies, and commentary from all around the world that point to the inexorable rise of hate crimes, assault, murder, of LGBTQ+ people in recent years.

Just on my trans corner of the flag, we've seen drag story-times for children targeted with assault. We've seen crates of Budweiser Light being shot to pieces by celebrities with assault weapons and posted online to acclaim, because Bud chose trans woman Dylan Mulvaney as an ambassador. We've seen neo-Nazis standing on the steps of the Victorian Parliament waving 'Trans Paedo Scum' flags.

Later this year, I'm due to visit the UK, the country of my birth. A 2023 study published by the Office for National Statistics stated that, as a subset of the general LGBTQ+ trend, anti-trans hate crimes rose by 11% in the previous year and have risen by 186% in the last five years. And this is representative only of the estimated 1 in 10 crimes that are actually reported.

For the first time in my life, I feel fear about being there. Fear of walking the streets, of going into pubs, of using the restroom. Of being in a train carriage with the wrong people, trapped between stops. Of exposing friends and family who might be with me to an unpleasant or dangerous incident. Of living my life over there without harm coming to me, just for a couple of weeks.



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It's still so relevant – but what can your business do?

All of this shows why Pride Month is still so important. But does it make me want to say 'Happy Pride'? To be honest – no, not really.

Some people do. And that's fine. But – and sorry for the long run-up to this – how, given the complexity of the context sitting behind Pride Month, should businesses be?

There are numerous ways for a business to consider its approach to Pride Month, that sit behind flags and adverts and all the rest of it. Here are three simple thoughts, from which other things can grow.

1. Give people in your organisation the latitude to express Pride in different ways

The on-trend 'celebrate!' messaging can feel forced, for some. It certainly does for me.

Recognise that different people in your organisation, queer or not, may want to express themselves differently. This could extend to (amongst other things) having different voices speak at a Pride Month town hall in your office, the way you message it and make it visible, the opportunities you give your people to take time of reflection, to make proposals about how they think you should approach Pride Month, and possibly, the way you consider your brand and product marketing.

2. Echo the sentiment of Stonewall – mark Pride Month as a turning point or a point of new beginnings in your business

Switching it on for a month is great, and if it's done with sensitivity, will make queer people in your organisation feel supported. What new, Pride related initiatives could you announce that will last beyond the month and help to redefine your approach to your rainbow people in your business or who may join it in the future?

3. Use your voice to highlight the challenge, not just the joy

If you use marketing during pride, internally or externally, does it all have to be 'happy'? Or could it be that you highlight some of the things I've mentioned, with a message of solidarity? Or even representation from LGBTQ+ people?

I know that this is risky (see Budweiser, mentioned above – and Target in the US, and Rip Curl, and Adidas, and, and, and). But the fact that it is risky merely shows why such support remains so necessary.

I don't want to be a downer, I really don't. But this is the reality we're in. We should use Pride Month to recognise the progress but also to realise the danger we're in as a progressive nation.

And we should all think hard about how we represent Pride Month in our businesses, and for our LGBTQ+ people.

See also: [Ellie Angell: My first three months as a trans person in the workplace](#)


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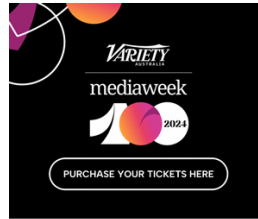
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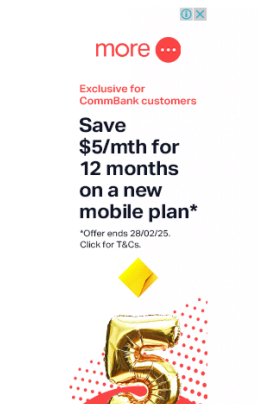
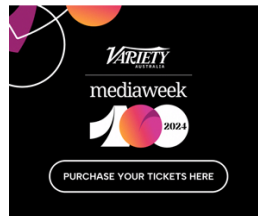
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Mel Silva: "We see a future where AI will supercharge the entire advertising lifecycle, from assembling your creative, to running your media, to measuring results."



Google unveiled a slew of advancements and updates to its ad products to drive growth for advertisers and brands at Google Marketing Live on Tuesday, which was attended by more than 700 advertisers and marketers at the Overseas Passenger Terminal in Sydney.

At the event, **Mel Silva**, managing director of Google Australia, said AI has allowed advertisers to address complex and evolving consumer behaviour, helping them provide unique and relevant creative at scale.

She said: "We see a future where AI will supercharge the entire advertising lifecycle, from assembling your creative, to running your media, to measuring results. Think of it as an 'all-at-once', growth and efficiency flywheel. That's our vision for what AI could do for advertising."



Mel Silva

Immersive ad experiences

The **tech giant** showcased how brands and advertisers can bring creative to life with immersive ad experiences that will help advertisers develop relevant creative at speed and scale.

Two new features will be introduced to Google's Product Studio later this year: generating visual assets that align with a brand's aesthetic, and turning images into video.

The **tech company** will also launch a Virtual Try On, allowing shoppers to view how clothes look on real people of different shapes and sizes. Universal Dubbing, now available in Australia, is a multi-modal tool that works across voice, text, and image to help advertisers translate creative into over 16 different languages through automatic captioning and dubbing.

The 3D shopping ad format, which will allow shoppers to see products in a 360-degree view, will also launch soon.



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