

RAINBOW WITH A CAUSE

- 2019 -



**A BRAND GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND USING THE PRIDE FLAGS
AND COLORS IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**



INTRODUCTION

IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO: YOUR COMPANY WANTS TO DO SOMETHING FOR PRIDE. COOL!

Before you know it, rainbow logos and rainbow swag and rainbow glitter are raining all over the Pride parade. But then... your brand gets tagged with something called [#RainbowWashing](#). Also known as using the rainbow or Pride flag purely for publicity or profit. Your intentions may have been good, but your rainbow flag just became a rainbow fail.

[LGBTQ+ consumers are savvy](#) and know when a brand doesn't dive deeper than a pretty glitter exterior. However! Just by reading this, you're already taking a step toward preventing this Roy G. Biv faux pas. Below you'll find five easy steps to help make sure your brand doesn't use a rainbow without a cause.



STEP 1: KNOW YOUR HERSTORY

PRIDE WAS BORN IN A RIOT.

Pride's history began predominantly with trans women of color, specifically [Marsha P. Johnson](#), who just got her own [statue of recognition](#) in 2019. In 1969, LGBTQ patrons of the Stonewall Inn were fed up with unjust police raids and violent harassment—so they finally fought back.

That night at the Stonewall Inn prompted four nights of rioting, spearheading the LGBTQ+ rights movement and resulting in the first Pride parade one year later to commemorate the riots. Learn more using the ol' search engine or by checking out some resources in the appendix.



Marsha P. Johnson

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsha_P._Johnson



STEP 1: KNOW YOUR HERSTORY

THE RAINBOW FLAG'S ORIGINS

The six-colored rainbow flag as we know it today is recognized as an international symbol of the LGBTQ+ community and has become a branding essential of Pride Month. The rainbow flag dates back to 1978, when Gilbert Baker was tasked by queer activist Harvey Milk to design an emblem of empowerment for the queer community. Baker refused to trademark the Pride flag to keep it free to use for the LGBTQ+ community. In 1979, the Pride flag was [modified](#) for promotional use as some of the colors wouldn't print well on fabric.



Pride Flag—1978

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))



Pride Flag—1979

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))



STEP 1: KNOW YOUR HERSTORY

In 2017, [an evolution to the Pride flag](#) was born in Philadelphia that incorporated brown and black stripes in an effort to recognize LGBTQ+ people of color, a community that has been notoriously left out of representations of Pride in the first 50 years since the Stonewall riots.

And in 2018, designer [Daniel Quasar](#) introduced another evolution, incorporating brown, black, and traditional trans flag colors into a new Pride flag he titled “Progress, a Pride Flag Reboot.”

The rainbow you use says a lot about your brand’s identity—choose carefully and make sure your company can articulate why you selected the flag you did. More Pride flags and their colors’ symbology can be found in step 4 and the appendix.



Pride Flag—2017

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))



“Progress” Pride Flag—2018

by Daniel Quasar, [quasar.digital](#)



STEP 2: KNOW YOUR WHY

WHY ARE YOU JOINING IN THE PRIDE CONVERSATION?

Does your brand have a history with the LGBTQ+ community or offer services specifically designed for LGBTQ+ people? Is there an affinity for your brand within the community? For example: Perhaps data shows your car brand is the one most preferred by folks who don't identify as straight. That's a great reason to celebrate them as valued brand loyalists. Or perhaps it's just that you want to support your customers and employees, some of whom identify as LGBTQ+.


Knowing your why and having it easily visible to your employees and the public gives you a reason to be in the Pride conversation. In turn, it allows Pride to help your brand's reputation, instead of running the risk of getting called out for #RainbowWashing.



STEP 3: SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS

NOW THAT YOU KNOW YOUR WHY, BACK IT UP!

Taking action can be as simple as donating to a [reputable organization](#), having a high [Corporate Equality Index](#), a high employment (and retention!) rate of LGBTQ+ identified people, or providing goods or services that benefit the LGBTQ+ community.



STEP 3: SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS

BRANDS THAT HAVE DONE IT RIGHT:

ABSOLUT

For close to 40 years, Absolut Vodka has been a supporter of the LGBTQ+ community. Their marketing efforts in this area are consistently a best practice.

[Absolut Rainbow Edition](#)

[Absolut Celebrates Its 30 Years of Marketing to Gay Consumers](#)



absolut.com



STEP 3: SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS

BRANDS THAT HAVE DONE IT RIGHT:

TARGET

Target's #TakePride campaign made a \$100,000 donation to GLSEN, an organization working to make schools safer, especially for LGBTQ+ youth.

[#takepride](https://www.target.com/c/pride-2021)

#takepride

+ **GLSEN** Target is proud to support GLSEN with a \$100,000 donation to help their mission of creating safe and inclusive schools for all.

- Adult Tees & Tanks
- Kids' Clothing
- Adult Swim
- Accessories & Pins
- Pride Staples

Celebrate together
Target team members share the stories of the people by their side when they #TakePride.

target.com



STEP 3:

SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS

BRANDS THAT HAVE DONE IT RIGHT:

SKITTLES

In an effort to draw focus on Pride Month in 2017, Skittles removed the color from their candy to share that “only one rainbow matters.”

[Not Everyone on the Internet Is Pumped That Skittles Went White for Pride Month](#)





STEP 3.5:

CONSIDER NOT USING THE FLAG

Yes, we created a half step :).

CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE OPTION: YOU CAN ALWAYS CHOOSE NOT TO USE THE FLAG OR THE RAINBOW.

If you don't have a why, or aren't sure if you have true colors to show yet, you could start by featuring LGBTQ+ folks in your content, adding pronouns to your email signature, or by simply saying "Happy Pride!" on your social channels.

This groundwork lays credibility with your brand beyond when it's topical and is a great first step to show your support. See the appendix for some great LGBTQ+ inclusive stock photography sources and casting support.



STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGNERS: You can stop skimming now. This is for you: how to (and how not to) use the Pride colors in your designs.

THE KEY: DESIGN WITH PURPOSE

Use a typeface designed by an LGBTQ designer or [THIS ONE](#), which was made in honor of Gilbert Baker (who you just read about above, RIGHT?). Pick the palette that makes sense for your brand and purpose. If you're featuring people, are they [representative of the diversity](#) within the LGBTQ+ community? Once you've got your purposeful design down, give yourself a [unicorn high five](#) and move on to step 5.



STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

ROYGBV swatches from [here](#).

Pantone 218
C2 M63 Y0 K0
R254 G106 B180
#fe6ab4
(original flag color)

Pantone 716
C3.5 M64 Y100 K0
R246 G139 B31
#F68A1E
(original flag color)

Pantone 356
C96 M26 Y100 K15
R0 G122 B64
#007940
(original flag color)

Pantone 2748
C100 M94 Y24 K22.5
R37 G64 B143
#24408E
(original flag color)

Pantone Black C
C0 M0 Y0 K100
R0 G0 B0
#000000
(added in 2017)

Pantone 1797
C9 M98 Y93 K1
R210 G35 B42
#D12229
(original flag color)

Pantone 107
C2 M7 Y95 K0
R254 G225 B26
#FDE01A
(original flag color)

Pantone 3252
C71 M0 Y31 K0
R0 G192 B192
#00c0c0
(original flag color)

Pantone 2607
C82 M100 Y18 K12
R115 G42 B130
#732982
(original flag color)

Pantone 731
C36 M66 Y100 K32
R127 G77 B0
#FDE01A
(added in 2017)



STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

DO be careful for legibility with the rainbow—make sure your photos and text are readable.

DO be respectful—feature the flag in authentic and respectful environments.

DO have members from the LGBTQ+ community with different backgrounds reviewing any material your brand is putting out.

DO be intentional.

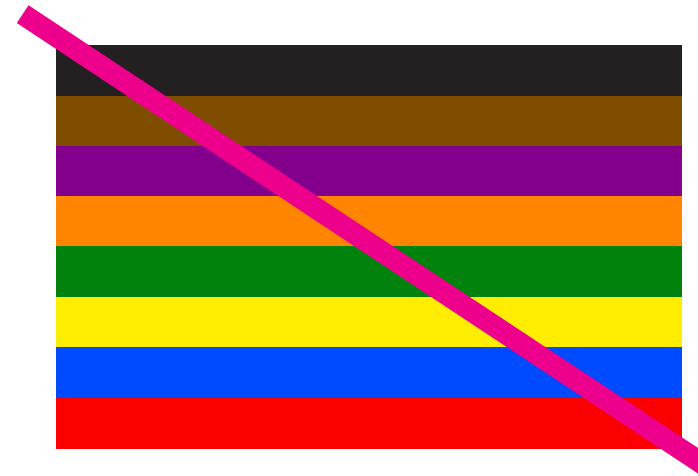




STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES



DON'T change the shapes and proportions of the colors. Use the Pride flag (and its variations) as it was designed.



DON'T change the order of the colors. Use the Pride flag (and its variations) as it was designed.



STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

FLAG VARIATIONS

All the flags on the following page are valid expressions of Pride, though they each have different significance to the community. It's important you choose the flag that best represents what your brand wants to say, whether it's choosing the original 1978 flag for historical reasons, the 1979 version because it's the most traditional/well-known expression of Pride, the 2017 version to specifically acknowledge communities of color, or the 2018 version that specifically acknowledges the trans/nonbinary community AND communities of color.



STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Pride Flag—1978



Pink—Sex, **Red**—Life,
Orange—Healing,
Yellow—Sunlight, **Green**—Nature,
Turquoise—Magic/Art,
Indigo—Serenity,
Violet—Spirit
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))

Pride Flag—1979



Red—Life, **Orange**—Healing,
Yellow—Sunlight, **Green**—Nature,
Blue—Harmony, **Purple**—Spirit
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))

Pride Flag—2017



Black & Brown—
LGBTQ+ persons of color,
Red—Life, **Orange**—Healing,
Yellow—Sunlight, **Green**—Nature,
Blue—Harmony, **Purple**—Spirit
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))

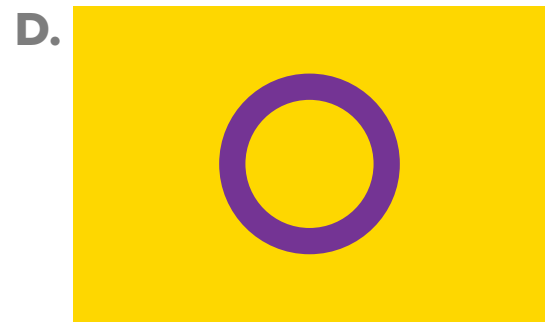
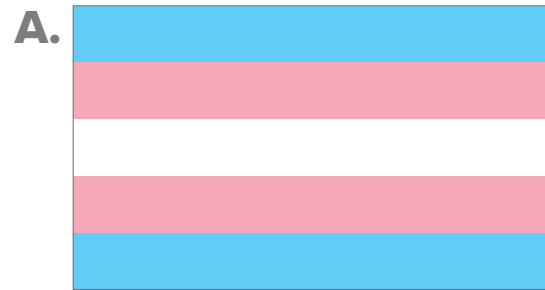
“Progress” Pride Flag—2018



Light Blue, Pink & White—
Trans & nonbinary individuals,
Black & Brown—Marginalized POC
communities, **Black**—Individuals
living with AIDS and those who
have been lost to the disease,
Red—Life, **Orange**—Healing,
Yellow—Sunlight, **Green**—Nature,
Blue—Harmony, **Purple**—Spirit
by Daniel Quasar, quasar.digital



STEP 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES



- A. [Transgender Pride](#)
- B. [Asexual Pride](#)
- C. [Pansexual Pride](#)
- D. [Intersex Pride](#)
- E. [Nonbinary Pride](#)
- F. [Aromantic Pride](#)
- G. [Bisexual Pride](#)
- H. [Genderqueer Pride](#)
- I. [Genderfluid Pride](#)

This is a representation of the many Pride flags inspired by Gilbert Baker's 1978 Pride flag. There are flags to represent an array of gender identities, sexual and romantic orientations, and even national and regional variations on these.



STEP 5: STRIVE FOR ALL-YEAR ALLYSHIP

The best thing you can do for Pride?

BECOME AN ACTIVE LGBTQ+ ALLY FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES YEAR-ROUND.

From job applications and hiring processes to bathrooms and pronouns, how you support your internal LGBTQ+ community says more about your brand than any Pride campaign. There are organizations all over the U.S. that exist to help companies do exactly that and can be found (you guessed it!) in the appendix.



conclusion

These five steps are a *start* to the ever-evolving role of LGBTQ+ allyship. The reward of good allyship remains the same, and it's something even the biggest brand can't buy: **AUTHENTICITY.**

Disclaimer: The above guidelines are meant to be a springboard for thoughtful, respectful, and more meaningful representations and appreciations of LGBTQ+ Pride within branded communications and should not be taken as an end-all, be-all rulebook. In that case, we'd need to call it a brand rule-line and that just doesn't have the same ring to it.



QUESTIONS?

Do you have questions about how to use the Pride flag or the best way to execute a Pride-oriented campaign? We're here to help! Email us at pride@copacino.com.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX

KNOW YOUR STONEWALL HISTORY

[Vox has a comprehensive article explaining Pride Month.](#)

[Wikipedia does, too.](#)

Support LGBTQ+ filmmakers and watch [The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson.](#)

MORE ABOUT GILBERT BAKER

[Rainbow Warrior—Biography](#)

[The View—Gilbert Baker](#)

MORE PRIDE FLAGS

[9 Pride flags with symbolism explained](#)

[The complete guide to Pride flags by the Advocate](#)

LANGUAGE

[Glossary of terms from GLAAD](#)

[Trans terms explained](#)

[Full GLAAD Media Reference Guide](#)



APPENDIX

INCLUSIVE STOCK PHOTO SITES

[Tonl](#)

[Gender Spectrum Collection](#) from Broadly (creative commons use)

[Project #ShowUs](#) from Getty Images

RESOURCES FOR MAKING YOUR WORKPLACE MORE LGBTQ+ FRIENDLY

[Trans Toolkit for Employers](#)

[Talking about Pronouns in the Workplace](#)

[Gender Identity and Gender Expression Workplace Review](#)

[Workplace Guide for LGBTQ Professionals](#)

[7 Ways to Create a More Inclusive Workplace for LGBTQ Employees](#)

RELEVANT ARTICLES AND ADDITIONAL READING

[The Problem with the Rainbow-Washing of LGBTQ+ Pride](#)

[Transparent Inclusion at Work: How to Build a Safer Workplace](#)



APPENDIX

OTHER LGBTQ+ RELATED DATES:

Holocaust Remembrance Day: January 27

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day: February 7

National LGBT Health Awareness Week: Last week in March

International Transgender Day of Visibility: March 31

Lesbian Visibility Day: April 26

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia: May 17

Harvey Milk Day: May 22

Pride Month: June

Juneteenth: June 19

Pulse Night of Remembrance: June 12

International Drag Day: July 16

Celebrate Bisexuality Day: September 23

LGBT History Month: October

National Coming Out Day: October 11

International Pronouns Day: October 17

Spirit Day: third Thursday in October

Transgender Day of Remembrance: November 20

World AIDS Day: December 1



MORE ABOUT / copacino+fujikado

This brand guide is the brainchild of Copacino+Fujikado's LGBTQ+ employees and was brought to fruition with the help of the agency's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative EDGE: Empowering Diversity & Growing Equity. You can learn *even more* about C+F [here](#).