

5 STEPS TO

**Communicate Your
Diversity Story Using
DEI Marketing**

Introduction

As an organization certified by the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC), you understand the significance of diversity, both to society and to your business. Doing away with bias and exclusion, as you know, can open your organization up to a wider audience. And the more effectively you communicate your diversity story through marketing, the more loyal and like-minded your customer base will become.

At the end of the day, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) marketing is about making customers feel seen and heard – even when they are just approaching your brand. Before becoming a customer, you want them to have an experience and impression of you that is positive, authentic, and values-aligned.

Professionals in creating content to make the world better, Sparx Publishing Group has created this guide to help organizations like yours be better equipped to market their diversity story, improve visibility, and grow their audience, all while furthering DEI efforts.

Quick Summary

STEP 1 | Make your certification visible

STEP 2 | Use inclusive imagery

STEP 3 | Examine your language choices

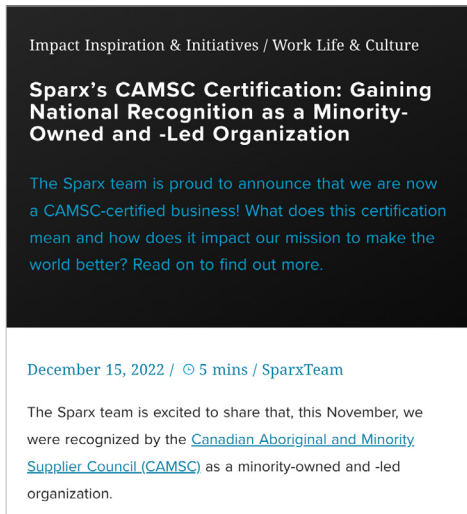
STEP 4 | Fine-tune for accessibility

STEP 5 | Invite diverse input



STEP 1

Make Your Certification Visible



Sparx Publishing Group @SparxPG · Mar 7
Purpose has always driven our [#marketing](#) agency, which is why we're so excited to be joining the United Way's spring [@SocialPurposeIn](#) Program, an 8-month, strategy-focused program to help businesses uncover or refine their [#SocialPurpose](#). 🙌
Learn more: [l8r.it/sCK5](#)



If you've achieved any certification that puts a stamp of approval on your DEI efforts, such as CAMSC, be sure to put it on display. These certifications are an important part of a brand's story and should be featured in your communications and visual branding.

It's a good idea to display certifications that express a commitment to DEI and purpose-driven initiatives (such as B Corp, CCAB, SDAC, IWSCC, WBE Canada, CGLCC, FSC, PEFC Canada, SFI, or Great Place to Work¹), together and sized equally.

We suggest you display your certification(s) in the following places:

- Website and blog footers
- Landing pages
- Email signatures
- Social media profiles and banner images
- External newsletters
- Advertisements
- Collateral, including business cards, banners, brochures, one-pagers, etc.
- Event calendars and registration pages
- Slide decks and presentations

We also recommend that, upon receiving a certification, you announce it across your social media and content channels, such as in a blog post and/or press release.

¹ **CCAB:** Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business; **SDAC:** Supplier Diversity Alliance Canada; **IWSCC:** Inclusive Workplace & Supply Council of Canada; **WBE Canada:** Women Business Enterprises Canada; **CGLCC:** Canadian Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; **FSC:** Forest Stewardship Council; **PEFC Canada:** Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Canada; **SFI:** Sustainable Forestry Initiative

STEP 2

Use Inclusive Imagery

To communicate your diversity story and commitment to DEI, it's important to use images that are representative of diversity, equity, and inclusion across all your content and channels.

Using diverse imagery effectively creates a bridge to your brand, celebrates differences, and invites everyone to interact with your brand by making them feel seen and heard; it's accessible, inclusive, and representative of folks from different walks of life and backgrounds, and keeps gender balance in mind.

We suggest beginning by doing a content audit. Assess your current visuals and be vigilant so that you avoid exclusionary, biased, or clichéd imagery.



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STEP 2 | USE INCLUSIVE IMAGERY

Good Imagery

- ✓ Portrays diverse groups of people positively interacting with products or services
- ✓ Avoids clichés, stereotypes, or tropes that reinforce harmful narratives
- ✓ Represents people with disabilities and other historically-excluded individuals in a positive way, that's not pandering or patronizing
- ✓ Depicts diverse groups of people working together, problem-solving, or interacting positively with each other



Bad Imagery

- ✗ Portrays only homogenous groups of people interacting with products or services
- ✗ Reinforces clichés, stereotypes, or tropes, such as a man “teaching” a woman about a topic
- ✗ Does not include people with disabilities or other historically-excluded individuals or does so in a way that panders, patronizes, or reinforces harmful narratives
- ✗ Depicts only homogeneous groups of people working together, problem-solving, or interacting positively with each other



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STEP 2 | USE INCLUSIVE IMAGERY

The good news is that there are a lot of different [databases](#) with stock image collections that represent different demographics and underrepresented groups. Some stock image libraries worth browsing through include:



For images featuring BIPOC individuals

[Nappy](#), [POC stock](#), and [Diversity Photos](#)

LGBTQIA2S+ folks

[Libertipix](#) and [The Gender Spectrum Collection](#)

People with disabilities

[Disability Images](#), [PhotoAbility](#), and [Disabled And Here Collection](#)

Other good stock photo libraries

[TONL](#) and [Unsplash](#).

We also recommend, where relevant, using images of your diverse team on your website, social media profiles, and wherever appropriate.



Core Values

Our values are what spark our creativity and ignite our fire.

1. Integrity

Sparx is built on trust – we work ethically to follow through on our commitments.

2. Grit

“Giving up” is not in our vocabulary. We’re always ready to take on any challenge and we are not intimidated by the unknown. We simply view it as “yet to be learned.”

3. Collaboration

We work as a team to build custom solutions that ensure we achieve business goals, every time.

4. Responsiveness

Communication is vital to any working relationship, and we’re always there when you need us.

5. Quality

We continually go above and beyond for our clients.

[Work With Us](#)

STEP 3

Examine Your Language Choices

Language has the power to be exclusionary or inclusionary just as much as visuals do, which is why it's important to carefully select each word to ensure it aligns with your messaging and welcomes your audience.

Consider extending your content audit to the words and phrases you use and create internal documentation to guide copywriting. Having a regularly-updated guide is an excellent way to hit the mark with your desired audience since it's a central source of truth for your copy and editing team.

To improve your language choices, you can:

- ✎ Replace exclusionary jargon with simpler phrasing
- ✎ Stay up to date on politically correct terms
- ✎ Keep in mind that different groups have different accepted terms, grammar, and spellings. Research how they refer to themselves in order to echo their wording and avoid problematic language
- ✎ Use gender neutral alternatives to gendered words
- ✎ Determine if your phrasing is influenced by bias or supports stereotypes, and edit as necessary
- ✎ Avoid harmful euphemisms or language that portrays historically-excluded or marginalized groups in a negative way
- ✎ Assess your tone and strike a balance that avoids sounding condescending, patronizing, oversimplified, exclusionary, or degrading
- ✎ Know where slang originated from and stray away if you'd be co-opting or culturally appropriating language of a group your organization isn't a part of, such as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) and expressions from the queer community, especially if the intended usage is commercial



STEP 4

Fine-Tune for Accessibility

Accessibility is critical for empowering audiences to feel like they are important to your brand. Certain display options or a lack of accommodations can impact their ability to engage with your content and may become isolating.



To improve accessibility you can:

- Write alt text for all the images on your webpages
- Caption multimedia marketing content
- Add copy describing images in social post captions, and consider whether emojis are necessary, as they can create confusion for people using text readers
- Remove or avoid content that could cause seizures or other physical reactions
- Adjust aspect ratios and contrast
- Avoid using colour as the only way to present information, prompt an action, or distinguish elements
- Make audio levels and text sizes adjustable
- Use content warnings on blog articles, videos, and social posts if the content may be triggering to people with specific mental health conditions



Be sure to reference the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#), which provides the international standard for making web-based content accessible for people with disabilities. You can test your webpages and marketing collateral against these standards to help you determine how accessible your website will be for everyone. Make adjustments as needed and ensure text and visuals are clear, readable, and compatible with text readers.

STEP 5

Invite Diverse Input

As a certified diverse organization, it can be incredibly helpful to give everyone the chance to provide their input regarding your DEI marketing. By bringing forward their unique backgrounds, perspectives, and identities, your teammates can help identify problem areas and provide innovative ways to communicate to audience segments you want to include.

You can learn from your team through:

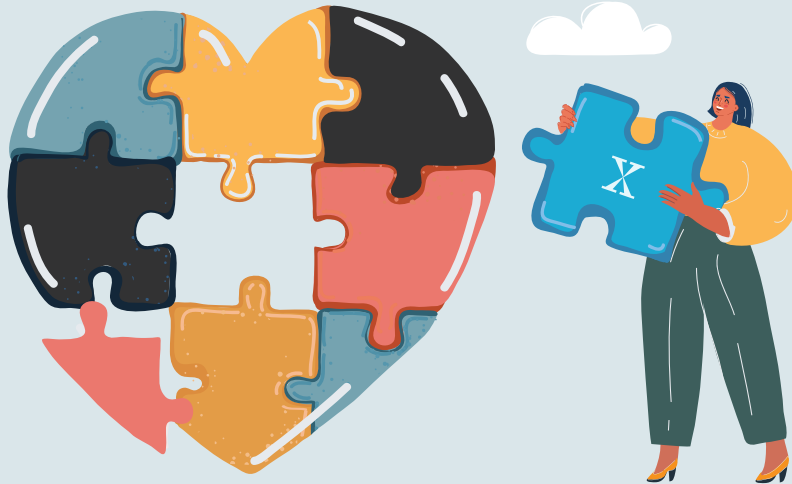
- Roundtable discussions
- Meetings for specific projects where everyone is invited to speak
- Collecting feedback from employees by asking them to review marketing content before launching campaigns and asking for their opinions on past campaigns
- Internal surveys and polls
- Discovering what causes, observances, events, and types of representation are important to your team

Just a note: Don't expect diverse employees to heavy-lift educating fellow staff and/or consumers about allyship. Be respectful of their time, energy, and boundaries, and consider how you can compensate them for their efforts if they agree to help out beyond their usual job description scope.

To open discussion further regarding your DEI marketing campaigns and processes, you can invite experts to speak to your organization about topics or areas where you may have experience or perspective gaps, assign your analytics team to run A/B testing on campaigns to see what is and isn't working, and ask consumers to provide their honest thoughts.

It's important to remain agile and be open to the varied input you receive so that you can make improvements to existing marketing content and/or craft new content that is more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.





Create Memorable DEI Marketing Campaigns With Sparx

As a [CAMSC-certified organization](#), Sparx would love to work with you to build a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable community. Want to team up? Give us a shout for a free consultation. Together, we can help make your diversity story shine. You can reach us [here](#).



[Check out Make the World Better Magazine](#)