

PUTTING THE NEW IN NUCLEAR: A STUDY ON
BRANDS' RESPONSES TO THE CHANGING
DEFINITION OF FAMILY

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the societal shift in perception of the American family and how this shift is impacting the way family is depicted in media, with an emphasis on the changing roles of fathers and LGBT families. An analysis of the advertising efforts of three brands—Honey Maid, Dove and Chevrolet—aims to define success factors of marketing to modern family dynamics. The findings in this study are intended to better the understanding of society's movement away from the traditional nuclear family, and how it is impacting marketing communications and the advertising industry.

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INTRODUCTION

For decades marketers promoted brands under the confident and uncontroversial assumption that most households fit the traditional definition of the nuclear family: a mother that stays home to clean, cook, and look after the kids, and a breadwinning father with a negligible role in caretaking. However, this simplistic understanding of the basic family unit has undertaken a significant revision in recent years. Our society has experienced a handful of progressive shifts in public opinion on matters such as interracial marriage, divorce, single parenting, multigenerational households, parental roles, and more recently, the LGBT community and same-sex marriage. According to 2013 census data, “only 4% of families are considered ‘traditional’ today” (Greenberg, 2013). As acceptance for these new family dynamics continues to grow, marketers are forced to reconsider the way they communicate with their increasingly diverse market.

Studies show that brands that receive the most attention from consumers are those that “get modern families” and “have moved past traditional stereotypes” (Greenberg, 2013). Two popular themes depicting the modern family in advertising today also happen to be the most antithetical to historically traditional attitudes: same-sex marriage and fathers with active roles in child care. Marketers have realized the increasing importance of communicating with these market segments more directly. For example, the initial techniques used in the early development of modern family advertising, such as coded messages and “gay vague” imagery, communicated ambiguous content. Today, consumers “have come to expect a little more” from brands and appreciate those that make more explicit statements of support (Ostrow, 2012). However, each variation of family structure presents unique challenges that can make it difficult to embrace new

norms without alienating the more traditional consumers. While many reputable companies have achieved success in marketing to non-traditional families, few have done so without receiving backlash from the opposition. Some themes remain sensitive; brands continue to make headlines and spark debate as they churn out advertisements directed at emerging family segments.

Despite the progress that brands have made in embracing the twenty-first century family, there is still limited academic research interpreting the criterion for effectively marketing to nontraditional families, or the implications that such actions have on brand perception. It is clear that brands that do not appeal to minority family structures are missing out on a large portion of their market, but the answer to fostering this appeal is far less obvious.

This study will consist of a case analysis of brands that have experienced success and scrutiny in their efforts to support nontraditional families, and an evaluation of both the benign and radical marketing methods used to target various audiences. The research examines consumer reactions to brands that take a progressive stance, and overall effectiveness of these brands' efforts. The later portion of this research considers which techniques prove to be more or less successful, and the implications for brand managers. The findings in this study are intended to better the understanding of society's movement away from the traditional nuclear family, and how this new normal is impacting marketing communications and the advertising industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forces Driving Progressive Shifts—Generational Impact

A variety of forces have driven the significant and widespread changes in public opinion on controversial topics that the United States has experienced in the past few decades, including “changing social norms” and “shifting cultural trends” (Borgerson, 2006, 956). One of the most prominent and influential forces has been legislation advancing equality, both in marriage and gender. At the time of this writing (May, 2015), 31 states and the District of Columbia have legalized marriage for same-sex couples, and many predict that the remaining 19 states will follow suit in the coming years. Additionally, “discrimination against gay married couples by the federal government is prohibited” (Witeck, 2014, 19). A 2013 Pew Research study reveals that 92% of America’s LGBT adults believe that “society has become more accepting of them in the past decade and an equal number expect it to grow even more accepting in the decade ahead” (A Survey of LGBT Americans).

This heightened sense of acceptance is likely a consequence of the Millennial generation and their influence on America’s political system. The Millennial generation has become the nation’s largest and most racially diverse, and is comprised of more than 90 million “young people born from 1982 to 2002” (Brownstein, 2014, 12). According to the Pew Research Center, Millennials are “unmoored from institutions,” with a greater representation of Americans that consider themselves politically independent and/or religiously unaffiliated than any other generation (Millennials in Adulthood, 2014, 4). The generation’s strongly progressive political agenda promotes change in support of social issues, particularly the legalization of marijuana, gay marriage, and “platforms that

curb women's rights" (Wheaton, 2012, 1). While Americans across all generations have seen a dramatic increase in support of same-sex marriage within the last decade, Millennials lead the movement, with 68% of the generation in favor of marriage equality (Millennials in Adulthood, 2014). Additionally, Millennials are more approving of single parenting than any other generation (Millennials in Adulthood, 2014). As more Millennials continue to enter the electorate, change in favor of the issues they support is "inevitable because public opinion, over time, will only tilt further" (Brownstein, 2014, 12). Political leaders are sensing "that where Millennials are on a lot of these cultural issues is where things will go for years" (Brownstein, 2014, 12). The generation and the people that recognize the power of their opinion are predicting the future of social progression, and are casting votes that will put them on the right "side of history" (Wheaton, 2012, 1).

One baby boomer that was likely influenced by the proposed changes brought forth by Millennials is President Obama. In the middle of his first term, Obama was quoted saying that he was "unwilling to sign on to same-sex marriage primarily because of [his] understandings of the traditional definitions of marriage" (Knickerbocker, 2014). However, today his administration is credited for taking significant action supporting the very opposite viewpoint. During his second term he candidly admitted, "attitudes evolve, including mine" (Knickerbocker, 2014).

Marketing to Dads

A 2012 Pew report shows that "there were about 2 million stay at home dads in 2012," (Beehner, 2014) twice as many as were reported in 1989 (Bui, 2014). Large as this number may seem, it doesn't even begin to reflect the size of the market of fathers

that play active roles in their children's development—a role that bears tasks like grocery shopping, changing diapers, and doing laundry. Last year, a survey of 2,400 US men ages 18 to 64 concluded that six of 10 dads identify themselves “as their household's decision maker on packaged goods, health, pet and clothing purchases” (Neff, 2011, 34). Some may attribute this redefinition of fatherhood to the fact that an increasing amount of American households are made up of dual-career couples. After all, the “rising economic status of women leaves them with less time” for household chores than they had 30 years ago. More women are “becoming educated and entering the workforce,” and men are “sharing more of the load at home” (Chaet, 2012). However, research suggests that these may not be entirely dependent phenomena. Thirty or 40 years ago, motherhood for many women meant going to work all day, and coming home to resume a second shift—making dinner, cleaning the house, and looking after children (Skenazy, 2007). Today, that same working mother shares her second shift with her husband. While child rearing is in part becoming a more equally shared task because of an increase in working mothers, it is important to note that dads are also simply becoming more wise to the importance of their presence in their children's upbringing. This shift is attributing to a “structural change in gender roles” within families (Miller, 2014). Author Paul Raeburn conducted research for his book, *Do Fathers Matter?*, concluding that the more fathers are involved, “the happier and more successful [their] children become, both from a biological and psychological standpoint” (Beehner, 2014).

Even if dad is the breadwinner of the family, a reality that still holds true for many American households, his role at home is far different from that of his own father. According to Jeremy Adam Smith, author of *The Daddy Shift: How Stay-at-Home Dads*,

Breadwinning Moms and Shared Parenting Are Transforming the American Family, dads say that “being an involved caregiver... makes life more meaningful” (Chaet, 2012). Today’s “men want what moms have”—the opportunity to bond with their children during developmental stages and be the person their kids can “turn to feel safe, to calibrate [their] values, to seek counsel, to receive encouragement” (Braiker, 2007). From 1965 to 2007, the average number of hours that men spent with their kids each week nearly tripled (Braiker, 2007).

Historically, fathers have measured success in terms of their ability to financially support their families. Today, success is defined by not only having financial success, but perhaps more importantly, by the ability to spend time with the family (Skenazy, 2007, 11). David Buxbaum, head of marketing for Lego, says his team’s research found that today’s dads “feel they are very different to the previous generation. They aspire to have more of a hands-on relationship with their children and prioritize more time for that” (Snoad, 2012, 20). Given this insight, it is important to understand what kinds of messages resonate most effectively with dads, and how brands are successfully reaching this previously untapped market.

We are seeing a gradual shift away from ads that previously portrayed dads as “domestic buffoons,” a trend that bred resentment from capable fathers nationwide (Neff, 2011, 34). “When it comes to their talents and abilities at raising children, or handling virtually anything having to do with the household, dads are feeling a lack of respect” (Chaet, 2012). MIT professor and author Donald Unger makes a valid point that even moms in today’s society are likely to be turned off by messages communicating incompetent dad stereotypes. A working mother that leaves her husband to care for the

children won't find it funny when dad is portrayed as an ill-suited caregiver, suggesting "that she had been irresponsible in ceding them to his care" (Chaet, 2012). Brands like Huggies, who have aired ads depicting fathers as stereotypically incapable parental figures, have received swift and significant backlash from the community protesting the "doofus dad" stereotype. Disgruntled fathers have even banded together to take a stance on such issues, rallying against brands whose advertising supports an "anti-dad societal bias" (Chaet, 2012). Dad 2.0, a community of fathers who "blog about fatherhood," organizes a summit each year as an opportunity for brands to have conversations with real dads about how modern fatherhood is commercially represented. According to the Dad 2.0 Summit website, the 2014 summit was sponsored by a handful of dad-friendly brands, including Dove and Kraft Cheese. Other support networks include NewDadTimes.com, "an online community of like-minded dads to commiserate over their diaper-changing rituals" (Beehner, 2014). Fathers have succeeded in communicating that they do not resonate with brands attempting humor through mockery of fatherhood, but that leaves marketers wondering, what will resonate with them?

A study conducted by market research firm Edelman Berland found that 75% of fathers feel responsible for the emotional well-being of their children, but only 20% of fathers feel that this is depicted in media (Heine, 2014a). Dads are seeking out messages that are directed at them and brands that support their roles. Many marketers struggle with making the decision to specifically target dads, when moms remain the core target market for family consumer goods. The key lies in the ability to balance messaging to both moms and dads. Brand consultant Robert Passikoff suggests that "gender becomes less the issue, and authentic and engaging portrayal becomes the mandate" (Chaet, 2012).

When advertising illustrates situations that are both realistic and “sensitive to the roles... of moms and dads,” they are more likely to create an emotional connection that resonates with everyone. Let’s compare a brand that focuses solely on targeting moms to a brand that produces messages for both moms and dads. The first brand runs the risk of alienating fathers and inflating the existing stereotype that domestic responsibilities are a female’s duty. The latter, however, gives dads the recognition they are looking for, and moms are not only able to see their roles “reflected in what dad does,” but also “find a less 'gendered' take on domestic responsibilities refreshing” (Snoad, 2012, 20).

Marketing to the LGBT Family

Gay and lesbian targeted marketing is not a new phenomenon. In fact, throughout history we have seen advertisers tackle the situation in various ways, even when it was viewed as a decidedly taboo affair. In fact, the earliest appearances of now suspected gay targeted advertising was not even labeled as such until researchers looked retrospectively at advertisements of the past century.

The first manifestations of gay themed advertising appear in the early 20th century, and some speculate that it may have launched without brand manager’s awareness that they even carried any gay innuendo. Artist J.C. Leyendecker illustrated images of “American masculinity” for various brands and magazines in the ‘20s and ‘30s (Oatman-Stanford, 2012, 4). Leyendecker was revered as “the foremost male image maker” of the era, but unbeknownst to most, he was gay. Through his work for products such as socks, razors, collared shirts, even soap, Leyendecker portrayed men, modeled after his secret lover, with an undertone of “glistening homo-eroticism” and “a real subtext of sexuality” (Oatman-Stanford, 2012, 1). However, in a time period in which

homosexuality was an inconceivable notion, the naivety of the American public allowed Leyendecker to get away with this blatant expression of his sexuality. His gay nuances were so clandestine that the “extremely right-wing magazine”, *The Saturday Evening Post*, used his work for countless covers (Oatman-Stanford, 2012, 4). Collectors and curators remark that while his symbolism entirely eluded the unsuspecting public, gays were likely “petrified” when they undoubtedly identified with Leyendecker’s suggestive designs (Oatman-Stanford, 2012, 7). Essentially, the messages that Leyendecker communicated through his work took on entirely different meanings depending on who decoded them.

Leyendecker’s work was the first of its kind, and his cunning ruse of creating homosexual imagery in a predominantly anti-gay society accurately foreshadowed the method that advertisers used to communicate with the gay community decades later. While the development of gay and lesbian content in marketing saw little progress for nearly 30 years after Leyendecker’s death, it is interesting to consider the impact that pioneers like himself may have had on those that survived him. Today, Leyendecker’s technique has evolved into widely used strategies of targeting the gay community: coded messaging and “gay vague” advertising, a term coined by Michael Wilke in 1997, which will be discussed at greater length within this research (Wilke, 1997).

Marketers have recognized the LGBT community as a lucrative market for decades. However, the threat of backlash and negative response from the heterosexual American majority carried so much weight that it kept brands in the proverbial closet despite the potential profit offered by gay consumers. The second half of the 20th century saw a gradual trend of progression in gay media, and by the dawn of the ‘90s, advertisers

detected the inadequacy of targeting the LGBT community through “isolated sponsorships of gay events” or “a mainstream ad in gay media” (Wilke, 1997). The bar had been raised. A handful of trail-blazing brands began actively targeting homosexuals with more explicit content through gay media platforms, such as *Out*, a popular gay and lesbian magazine, in an attempt to connect with gay consumers in a more meaningful way. These market-specific platforms offered brands the possibility of directly reaching the LGBT community in a way that kept the less-censored advertisements subject to gay eyes only. The segregation gave advertisers the best of both worlds—the ability to get recognition in the gay community without turning away straight consumers—and alleviated brands’ concerns of being labeled as a gay brand. While this tactic was a step in the right direction, 1998 studies showed that only 3% of the LGBT community actively read such market-specific publications, while about 86% reported reading mainstream magazines, such as the *New Yorker* and *People* (Oakenfull, 2005). In order to garner the attention of a larger portion of the gay market segment, marketers knew they would have to crossover into mainstream media, which created a new challenge.

Placing an explicitly gay advertisement in the middle of *Life* magazine was a seemingly ludicrous alternative, so advertisers innovated by crafting print ads and television spots with implicitly gay content through coded messaging. The LGBT community, like many sociocultural subsets, has certain language and symbols that carry meaning for members of the in-group, but an entirely different or insignificant meaning for heterosexuals. Subtle cues, such as pink triangles, rainbows, references to characteristically gay pop-culture, and the use of spokespeople that were adored by the LGBT community (but less recognizable by the general public), all “resonated loud and

clear to gay audiences,” but didn’t suggest anything out of the ordinary to heterosexuals (Klara, 2013, 4). The “gayness” of the ads was entirely “in the eye of the beholder” (Oakenfull, 2005, 427). One of the best examples of the coding technique is seen in a 1994 Subaru campaign that ran a series of print ads of the back end of a Subaru, with license plates reading things such as “P-TOWN,” short for Provincetown, a popular vacation destination for the LGBT community, and “XENA LUVR,” a hit show among the lesbian demographic (Klara, 2013).

After marketers succeeded in targeting both gay and straight consumers simultaneously, they began experimenting further with LGBT advertising and adopted a technique known as “gay vague,” an eerily similar iteration of Leyendecker’s style in the 20s and 30s. Gay vague advertising ditched the rainbows and simply depicted scenarios in which the actors may be perceived as friends by a straight viewer, but perceived as a couple by a gay viewer. Once again, the message could be interpreted differently depending on the values of the consumer, but this time around advertisers used even more discretion. If mainstream Americans caught on and the advertisement received negative attention, the brand could simply deny any intention of putting a gay inflection in the ad (Klara, 2013). One of the earliest and most iconic examples of gay vague was executed by Volkswagen in 1997. The TV spot “Sunny Afternoon” featured two men driving around in a VW Golf. The average American likely didn’t think twice about the men’s sexuality, assuming they were merely roommates or friends. However, a gay person could have easily viewed the two men as a couple. Volkswagen strategically failed to define the relationship, letting consumers take it as they may (Klara, 2013).

Throughout the past two decades, gay vague marketing and coded messages within advertising have been regarded as the key to reaching out to the gay and lesbian community without alienating mainstream Americans. Advertisers were smug with this clever solution that achieved the best of both worlds. The results of a 2005 study shown below suggests that implicit gay and lesbian advertising was seen as a genuine approach to gaining a loyal LGBT consumer base.

Figure 2. The Effect of Type of Advertising Content on Mainstream and Gay and Lesbian Audiences Responses to Advertising in Mainstream Media.

		Type of Advertising Content		
		Mainstream	Explicit G&L	Implicit G&L
Type of	Mainstream	Targeting	Alienation	No alienation

(Oakenfull, 2005, 436)

However, the technique didn't prove to be as foolproof as research initially suggested. The clandestine nature of implicit content "denotes a lack of true openness on the part of the brands" (Klara, 2013, 5). While gay vague advertising was initially met with a "thanks for noticing, your secret is safe with us," the response has evolved into "are you embarrassed by us?" Today's LGBT community is more visible and proud than ever and they want advertising to reflect the progress they have made. Brian Stout, senior strategist at Leo Burnett and a member of the LGBT community, verbalized their collective sentiments: "when we first saw [gay vague] we were really excited about it. Then you realize we're the only ones who get it... Being quiet or vague about it just doesn't cut it" (Ostrow, 2012, 2). We are seeing history repeat itself, and the bar is raising yet again. A handful of brands have taken note, and recent gay targeted advertising admirably lacks the vagueness that characterized its predecessors. Gay vague is dead.

Additionally, marketers have traditionally measured the buying power and girth of the LGBT community by the number of individuals that identify as gay or lesbian (or bisexual/ transgender). Today, however, the audience that is receptive to homosexual advertising includes not only gays and lesbians, but their friends, families, and supporters, which now characterizes the majority of Americans (Ostrow, 2012). There are various grassroots organizations made up of predominantly straight people that are dedicated to the advancement of the LGBT community. PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), arguably the most well-known among these organizations, states their mission on their website:

By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through:

- Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ
- Education for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ
- Advocacy in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ

(About PFLAG, 2014).

Members of these organizations are likely to be just as enthusiastic toward a brand that supports the gay community as the average gay person, if not more so. With this growing demographic it seems as though brands that consciously choose not to show outward support for the gay community are the ones taking a radical stance, while incorporating gay content is becoming more mainstream. According to David Morse, President-CEO of

New American Dimensions, “the decision as to whether or not to embrace the LGBT community is a lot less tricky than it has ever been” (2013).

While the American people have made great progress in the overall acceptance of the LGBT community, marketers are still receiving a paradoxical response to their communications that embrace the assimilation of gays into mainstream media. It seems logical that advertisements featuring gay couples would go largely unnoticed, given that they represent the relationships of hundreds of thousands of Americans, but time and again these ads prove to spark controversial conversation. At the forefront of these conversations stands opposition groups such as One Million Moms, a non-profit subsidiary of the American Family Association (AFA) that supports fundamentalist Christian values, and in recent years has been passionately vocal about their aversion to “indecent” in the media (One Million Moms, 2014). The group has incited boycotts against major American brands such as J.C. Penney, Honey Maid, Oreo, and Urban Outfitters (Dalton, 2012).

Motivation Analysis

It is important to consider brands’ motivations for jumping on the diversity bandwagon. While few executives have made statements on behalf of their company’s decisions to launch non-traditional campaigns, those that do often revert to umbrella statements about company values (Zmuda, 2014). But are values the real force behind these marketing decisions? The numbers tell us no. Both the LGBT community and fathers represent a huge segment of the market in economic terms. When compared with other minority groups within the US, the LGBT audience has more buying power than the Asian and American Indian populations combined (Ostrow, 2012). As mentioned

previously, dads are assuming more and more control over the purchasing decisions in their homes. Ignoring these two market segments, the LGBT community and fathers, means a potential loss of a huge segment of the market. Brands that recognize this, especially now, are making moves that take them where the business and money are.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study will examine three brands that have targeted LGBT families and/or fathers with active roles in childcare in their advertising. These brands have been selected based on a set of criterion.

1. The brand must be a widely recognized brand that sells a commodity-type product or service to a relatively broad segment of the market
2. The brand's advertising efforts must clearly target non-traditional families through explicit statements recognizing change and difference (as opposed to gay-vague or coded messaging techniques)
3. Said advertising efforts must have been executed within the past two years
4. Said advertising efforts must have sparked some form of significant reaction from consumers and the advertising community
5. The brand's executive and upper-level management must have publicly spoken on behalf of said advertising efforts
6. The advertising efforts must have appeared on main-stream media platforms available to the public

The companies for which this thesis develops cases are Honey Maid, Dove, and Chevrolet. Each case provides a review of the brand, their relevant campaign work,

management support, consumer reaction to the campaign, and campaign effectiveness.

The data used to create these case analyses was collected from various articles, published interviews, and social media platforms.

Honey Maid

Overview

Graham cracker brand Honey Maid was established in 1925. In 1930 the company was acquired by Nabisco, a subsidiary of multinational conglomerate Mondelez International, and has remained under their management since. According to Honey Maid's website, despite the brand's various looks and names over the years, one thing has remained unchanged: their dedication to staying "wholesome and delicious" (Our History).

Campaign

Honey Maid's complete history of advertising efforts is scattered and irregular. For nearly a decade prior to a brand re-launch in 2012 that focused on communicating with kids, Honey Maid lacked any national campaign support, and hadn't aired television spots since the 1990's (Newman, 2012). The 2012 campaign aimed to position the cracker as a stand-alone snack for children, and reinforce the brand's "rich history of being a wholesome snack for kids" (Newman, 2012). After recognizing initial success from these intensified advertising efforts, Honey Maid shifted their focus in 2014 and teamed up with advertising agency Droga5 to create a national campaign that brought parents into the conversation. This campaign, coined "This is Wholesome", capitalized on celebrating diversity. It was built on the "cultural insight" that the "family composition and dynamic is different," and discovered a way to make this cultural shift

relevant to a 90-year-old cracker brand. Families, like Honey Maid, have evolved over the years, yet one thing that has remained unchanged is the importance of “wholesome connections” (O’Leary, 2014).

“This is Wholesome” featured documentary style videos that captured the lives of real, non-traditional families across the U.S. Two of these families stand out in relation to this paper’s analysis: a single dad, and a two-father family. The “series of intimate portraits” was displayed online and through television spots and quickly stood out as one of the most radical advertising efforts of the year (Honey Maid: This is Wholesome, 2014). The campaign’s 30 second television spot, which aired on mainstream channels such as ABC during TV show “The View” (Schultz, 2014), showed snippets of everyday moments in various families’ lives, with a voiceover that proclaimed: “No matter how things change, what makes us wholesome never will. Honey Maid. Everyday wholesome snacks for every wholesome family. This is wholesome.” (Honey Maid: This is Wholesome, 2014). According to one Mondelēz spokesperson, the media buy for the campaign spanned broadly “across various TV networks” (Schultz, 2014).

One of the most surprising elements of the campaign was that Honey Maid didn’t even test the idea before they launched it, which is nearly unheard of for marketing efforts that may be construed as controversial. Evidently, the company recognized “from a strategic standpoint what they want[ed] to talk about,” and figured out how to make it relevant to the brand (O’Leary, 2014). The concept presented inherent risk and required an element of fearlessness, but Honey Maid’s strong convictions in their beliefs and their insight about American families took precedence over any measure of uncertainty. This is

striking, considering the research that implies that financial benefits are the predominant motivating factor for brands to delve into inclusive advertising.

Prior to the March campaign launch, Honey Maid's presence on social media was minimal, even nonexistent on some fronts (O'Leary, 2014). With "This is Wholesome," the brand brought the campaign to life online, sharing videos on YouTube and prompting followers to join the conversation through social media by sharing their personal wholesome moments using the hashtag #ThisIsWholesome (Schultz, 2014). Honey Maid even created a social team devoted to reading and responding to consumer feedback (O'Leary, 2014).

Management Support

While Honey Maid does not have a corporate mission or vision in their own right, their wholesome views trickle down from their parent company's values and manifesto. One of Mondelez International's seven values is to be "open and inclusive," and the opening stanza of their manifesto reads: "A world full of differences. Different lives. Different views. Different tastes. But really, we're all the same. Wherever you go. Whoever you meet. We all seek joy" (Our Dream). According to one top executive at Mondelez International, the "This is Wholesome" campaign is a "true reflection" of the company's core values. The company has historically "fostered a diverse and inclusive workforce" and operates under "non-discrimination policies, benefits, and other practices that include LGBT workers." Showcasing these convictions in their business activities is an important differentiator for Mondelez in recruiting talent and vying for new customers (Shayon, 2014).

Mondelēz International Senior Marketing Director Gary Osifchin spoke out on behalf of the campaign in several interviews. “It’s about recognizing that the American family dynamic and look has changed over the decade, and our product line has changed in parallel with that changing American family dynamic” said Osifchin during an interview on “Good Morning America” (Honey Maid Counters, 2014). His vocal support of “This is Wholesome” and the messages it delivered emphasized the company’s steadfast dedication to the campaign despite potential opposition. The candid language used in not only the ads themselves, but also during Osifchin’s interviews showed Honey Maid’s trail-blazing spirit driving the campaign. While other brands timidly tested the waters of targeting gay parents and single dads, Honey Maid jumped into the conversation head first through a genuine expression of their recognition of the changing definition of family and their desire to connect with non-traditional consumers. Osifchin expressed the realness behind the campaign’s stories: “We’re on a journey here where we are very much showing America who they are. It’s reality... we’re telling real stories here” (O’Leary, 2014).

Consumer Response

Consumer response to the campaign poured in following the air of the first commercial on March 10th, 2014. As anticipated, the campaign sparked controversy as consumers shared their sentiment toward the ad on social media platforms, chiefly Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Honey Maid’s newly formed social team engaged real-time marketing efforts, listening and responding to feedback as it was posted. According to Osifchin, within “the first three days of the ad launch,” Honey Maid saw “98 percent of mentions about it as positive or neutral and 2 percent negative” (O’Leary, 2014).

However, it didn't take long for religious and anti-gay groups, among other objectors, to get their opinions noticed. Right-wing organization One Million Moms, mentioned previously in this study, was quick to publicize their disapproval of the gay couple featured in the ad. The group's public statements harshly criticized the brand, telling Honey Maid and Nabisco to be "ashamed of themselves" for "attempt[ing] to normalize sin" (Nichols, 2014). The outrage went as far as to spur an email campaign, urging One Million Moms and AFA members to boycott the company and to email Honey Maid to express their disgust in the company's decision to disrespect "millions of American families by supporting the homosexual agenda" (Tashman, 2014). The American Decency Association joined the boycott, comparing Nabisco to Satan himself and accusing them of "chang[ing] definitions like family and wholesome" (Tashman, 2014).

The fact that the ad emphasizes the word "wholesome" proved to be a major point of contention for some consumers. The word has long been used by the "evangelical right" to describe more traditional, heterosexual family structures, while "unwholesome" has been used to characterize homosexual or interracial couples (Solomon, 2014). One consumer posted a comment on Honey Maid's Facebook page in March of 2015 that reads: "I can't believe you are still running that commercial for Go Bites that equates divorce and same sex marriage with wholesome!" (Maguron, 2015). Many social media posts contained similar objections to the use of the word "wholesome".

Honey Maid responded to both their supporters and the opposition in a radical and clever way. Less than a month after debuting the "This is Wholesome" ad, Honey Maid released an emotionally intelligent response video with yet another powerful message. The video, entitled "Love", reinforced their original theme of tolerance, with a new

component that prompted many smiles and some eyebrow raises. The company hired two artists, Linsey Burritt and Crystal Grover, to take all the angry comments Honey Maid received on social media, and turn them into “something beautiful” (Dobrow, 2014). Glimpses of some of the negative content are shown, highlighting harsh statements such as “NOT ‘WHOLESOME,’” “DO NOT APPROVE,” and “Disgusting!!” (Soloman, 2014). Burritt and Grover rolled up paper print outs of each comment into tubes, and glued them together to create a “paper sculpture” rendering the word “Love” (Dobrow, 2014). The video then goes an extra step by expanding the sculpture using printouts of all the positive comments that Honey Maid received, “over ten times as many,” according to the video. The final product provided an incredible visual display of the overwhelming proportion of positive to negative reaction to “This is Wholesome,” and ends with a final reminder that “only one thing really matters when it comes to family,” love. The sequence and “pacing of the spot is impeccable: the first half turns hatred into love, and the second half provides evidence of love itself” (Solomon, 2014).

To collect the necessary social data and statistics, Honey Maid used “linguistic resource classification” to scan for buzz words on both the positive and negative end of the spectrum, such as “love” and “beautiful” versus “evil” and “wrong.” For further quality assurance, each post was read by Burritt and Glover before being added to the structure (Solomon, 2014).

The release of “Love” added momentum to the volley between consumers and Honey Maid. Three days after the second ad debuted, One Million Moms director Monica Cole stated that the members of the organization now knew where Honey Maid stood, and that they would vote against the campaign “with [their] wallets” (Malone,

2014). While the organization never publicly acknowledged their failed attempt at boycotting Nabisco, they have since removed their initial press release regarding the situation. However, once again, the “Love” video prompted swarms of praise and support from viewers that applauded Honey Maid for sticking to their original message.

Campaign Effectiveness

The original “This is Wholesome” YouTube video has received over 8.1 million views to date (as of May, 2015), and the “Love” video has racked up over 4.2 million views, over 30% of which came from Millennials (Snyder, 2015). According to the New Yorker, the video received over 1.5 million views on its first day online, and online viewership tracker Visible Measures reported 2.8 million views in the first five days. During an interview with Brandchannel in December 2014, Osifchin revealed some key metrics regarding the effectiveness of the campaign:

“During the campaign, search around Honey Maid increased 402%. Across all social platforms, content was shared more than 277K times, with the “Love” video as our most viral content. We saw a 35,000 increase of new followers and fans across our owned social platforms, in addition to 5.6x lift in brand mentions” (Shayon, 2014).

A study done by Google on LGBT advertising revealed that in the months following the campaign, company sales increased 7% compared to previous years, and the brand “drove penetration growth among Millennial households +1 point” (Snyder, 2015).

Additionally, the campaign earned an impressive amount of earned media. Multiple reputable advertising sites and nearly every online news source published articles recognizing Honey Maid for spearheading the movement into inclusive

marketing, including *AdWeek*, *Advertising Age*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today* to name a few. The New Yorker's article about the campaign was one of the most shared articles in the magazine's history.

Honey Maid was hugely inspired by the overpowering positive reaction to the campaigns. In a statement released at the end of 2014, Osifchin promised Honey Maid's audience a commitment to "representing the diversity seen in American society today" (Shayon, 2014). In 2015 the company followed through on that promise with a new iteration of "This is Wholesome" advertising their new product Go Bites. The extension of the campaign is keeping the initial conversation alive. Over 300 comments regarding the ads have been posted to Honey Maid's Facebook page since the first of the year (2015).

Dove

Overview

Skincare company, Dove, was founded by the Lever brothers in the 1950s. In 1957 the brothers launched their first product, the beauty bar, "revolutionizing the way women cared for their skin" (Dove®, 2015). Since its inception Dove has continued to expand their product offerings and has remained at the leading edge of skincare research and technological innovation. The company is a subsidiary of Unilever, one of the largest multinational consumer goods companies in the world. Today, Dove is recognized globally as a top cleansing brand, due in large part to their successful marketing efforts. According to Unilever's website, Dove products can be found in nearly 50% of households in the US (Dove®, 2015).

For decades Dove has strongly identified with women, through global campaigns that celebrate unconventional beauty using “real women” to communicate their message. Their mission is to redefine the global definition of beauty to accept women of all shapes, sizes, and color. In 2004 they launched the Campaign for Real Beauty, an effort to boost women’s self-esteem, and received unprecedented support and success. Today the company continues its ongoing commitment to widening the “narrow definition of beauty” (Dove®, 2015), and has been dubbed by some experts as one of the most impressive brand builders in the last 15 years (Aaker, 2013).

In early 2010, after positioning itself as a women’s brand for nearly 40 years, Dove identified the shifting landscape of the market for men’s personal care products. The idea of men taking increasing interest in their personal appearance and hygiene had garnered more and more popularity in recent years. Dove capitalized on this growing market for men’s products and launched Dove Men+Care, diversifying their product offering and conversation to include men for the first time in the company’s history (Miziolek, 2012).

Campaign

A press release announcing the introduction of the new Dove Men+Care product line promised products that would “literally provide total skin comfort” for men (Unilever, 2010). Similar to their original pursuit of celebrating women’s beauty, Dove Men+Care “celebrates the unsung moments when a man is comfortable with himself”—life experiences such as finding a partner and becoming a father (Unilever, 2010). Since its formation Dove Men+Care has launched a variety of successful advertisements, starting with a 60-second Super Bowl spot in 2010 (Johnson, 2014).

In 2014 Dove Men+Care continued their celebration and identification with “real men” through a campaign titled “Calls For Dad”. The campaign was built upon the insight that, for the modern male, fatherhood and caring for children is paramount. It aimed to portray the ways in which “real men care” through videos showcasing caring moments between children and their fathers. The featured video captured over 25 genuine moments of fatherhood, from temper tantrums and tickle fights, to school dance sendoffs and becoming a grandfather (Unilever, 2010). In nearly each moment a son or daughter, whether they be 2 years old or 30, calls out to their father. Near the end of the spot text appears across the screen that reads, “For all the times they’ve answered our call... Isn’t it time we celebrate Dads?”

While the ad is heartwarming and even a bit of a tearjerker, it was not just an unsubstantiated attempt to give consumers warm fuzzy feelings. Dove conducted extensive research to get to know their audience prior to developing the campaign. They enlisted the services of Edelman Berland, a full-service market research firm, to survey over 1,000 fathers in their target audience, gauging opinions about fatherhood and feelings towards how dads are represented in media (Heine, 2014a). The data collected from the surveys provided Dove with remarkable insights about the way the idea of masculinity has evolved.

The “Calls For Dad” video was released on Dove Men+Care’s YouTube channel in June of 2014, just in time for Father’s Day. This calculated decision to launch via YouTube was based on Dove’s previous YouTube success and their research discovery that “men spend nearly twice as much time on YouTube than women” (Heine, 2014a). The YouTube video was accompanied by a media buy for a big push on NBC’s

Today.com. The campaign was further promoted on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Dove Men+Care encouraged fans to submit personal moments of fatherhood using the hashtag #RealDadMoments (Unilever, 2014).

In early 2015, the brand leveraged the assets that they developed for the “Calls For Dad” campaign, and revamped them for a new “Real Strength” campaign that launched during the 2015 Super Bowl. An extended version of the 30-second Super Bowl spot was released on YouTube in the days leading up to the big game, and is very similar to the “Calls For Dad” video. It uses the same footage with a new voiceover from ESPN host Mike Greenburg—a change designed to garner the attention of the program’s sport savvy audience—and new text at the end that reads, “What makes a man stronger? Showing that he cares.” The campaign makeover also included a new tagline, “Care makes a man stronger,” and an updated hashtag, #RealStrength. This new messaging deliberately challenges traditional macho stereotypes in advertising. The launch also included plans for a large social media push, utilizing a combination of planned and real-time marketing (Poggi, 2015). Dove Men+Care used Twitter to have conversations with real fathers and posted relevant photos and quotes that had been submitted by users.

Management Support

Dove published a press release in June of 2014 noting the absence of accurate portrayals of dads in media. “Calls For Dad” was determined to fill that void and “overturn antiquated representations of dads” as “disconnected, bumbling and incompetent” (Unilever, 2014). In addition, Jennifer Bremner, Director of Marketing for Unilever, spoke out on behalf of the campaign to represent Dove’s views. Her statements of support are quoted in multiple articles. She communicated Dove Men+Care’s

recognition of the way roles of fatherhood have evolved and how fathers' more caring experiences are translating into strength (Poggi, 2015).

Consumer Response

The strategic move to debut the "Real Strength" campaign on "sports' biggest stage" gave Dove Men+Care the attention they were looking for (Unilever, 2015). One notable positive response came from Dad 2.0. Their public support of the brand has boosted awareness of Dove Men's efforts and provided the brand with some credibility within parenting circles. Dove Men was the title sponsor at the Dad 2.0 Summit in 2014 and 2015 (2015 Sponsors, 2015). Dad 2.0 was not the only band of fathers to recognize Dove Men's efforts. The campaign was met with gratitude from the National At-Home Dad Network, a community with a mission to connect "Stay-at-home dads locally and nationally, to offer advocacy, community, education & support" (National At-Home Dad Network). They praised Dove Men as an "innovator," "uplifting and non-judgmental about involved fatherhood," and "a brand that gets it" (#FantasyDecisions, 2014). The group initiated and scheduled a weekly Twitter chat with the brand in September of 2014 during which members were urged to communicate with Dove Men+Care online about fantasy football and the organization's upcoming 19th annual convention, an event sponsored by Dove.

One study of the campaign revealed that while the product is intended for men, the ad received overwhelming positive reaction from women. Ninety-four percent of the study's female participants reported that they "'very much liked' or 'somewhat liked' the ad, compared to 83% of male participants" (Dove Men Super Bowl Ad, 2015). This finding is reflected on Dove Men+Care's Facebook page. Of the comments regarding the

campaign that were posted to the brand's Facebook on the day of the Super Bowl and the days following, nearly half were written by women. Statements of support from women such as, "Your ad brings tears to my teenage daughter's eyes and a lump to my throat" (Simon, 2015), "As a mom to two boys, it warms my heart to hear all those 'daddy's!'" (Gore, 2015), "It made me want to call my dad and say thanks" (Baldonado, 2015), and "makes me think of my husband" (Kagan, 2015) flooded social media.

Campaign Effectiveness

According to Mintel, Dove Men+Care captured an additional 1.44% of the market from 2013- 2014. It is unclear how much of this increase was a result of the "Calls For Dad" campaign, but it was likely a factor, especially considering the social media attention that the campaign received. At the time of this writing (May, 2015), the "Calls For Dad" video has received over 12.3 million YouTube views and nearly 2,400 comments since being published on June 9th, 2014. It was ranked the fifth most viewed YouTube advertisement in June, 2014 (Lyng, 2014). The "#RealStrength" video, posted on YouTube on January 20th, 2015, has received over 6.4 million views and more than 500 comments to date.

Combined, Dove Men+Care's original posts of the "Calls for Dad" and "Real Strength" videos on their Facebook page received nearly 47,000 likes and over 27,000 shares. On the day of the Super Bowl, February 1, 2015, Dove Men+Care engaged in over 230 conversations with fans on Twitter, only a fraction of the attention the campaign received in the weeks preceding and following the big game.

Ace Metrix, a television advertising analytics company, conducted research on the "Calls For Dad" spot that revealed impressive information. The ad scored well above

average in “attention,” “likeability,” and “emotional sentiment” (Lyng, 2014). The company also created a word cloud made up of the words that appeared most frequently within the “Calls For Dad” YouTube video comments. The most commonly used words include “heartwarming,” “attention,” “love,” “touching,” “family,” “cute,” “sweet,” “heart,” and “relatable” (Lyng, 2014). Additionally, 9.5% of consumers that commented on the YouTube video used words such as “really” and “very” when communicating their reactions to the ad. According to Ace Metrix, “this is usually a sign of... strong emotional response” (Lyng, 2104). Additionally, Spot Trender, a research company that specializes in pre-testing commercials, conducted a study on viewer reactions to Super Bowl ads. Dove’s “Real Strength” spot scored “one of the ‘most consistent positive reaction graphs’ Spot Trender has ever seen, with ‘negligible negative reaction’” (Dove Men Super Bowl Ad, 2015).

The Marketing Arm, the agency responsible for producing the “Real Strength” campaign, has previously produced other campaigns for Dove Men+Care that proved to boost key performance indicators measuring the target market’s affinity towards the brand (Dove Journey to Comfort). Considering this information in conjunction with consumer reactions gathered from the Ace Metrix and Spot Trender studies, it is likely that brand affinity will once again be boosted with the “Real Strength” campaign.

The “Real Strength” campaign also benefitted from earned media surrounding the Super Bowl. While Super Bowl commercials are notoriously one of the most expensive forms of media, they are also the most viewed and discussed ads of the year. According to an estimate by Neilson, the 2015 Super Bowl was viewed by over 114.4 million Americans.

One less positive research finding of the campaign was that Dove Men+Care was one of the top five Super Bowl advertisers that “lost the most Millennials at checkout” (Here are the Super Bowl Advertisers, 2015). This is interesting, considering the results of a study that analyzed teen girls’ reactions to Super Bowl commercials. The focus group of teenage girls gave the Dove commercial a 10/10, and overall was the most popular video of the six ads in the study (Pittman, 2015).

Chevrolet

Overview

Chevrolet is an American car manufacturer that was founded in 1911 in Detroit, Michigan by Louis Chevrolet and Billy Durant. In 1917, Chevrolet was acquired by General Motors (GM), a multinational corporation. Today, GM is the parent company to 10 different car brands and, according to Edmunds Data Center, is the number one American car manufacturer in the world. More than a century after its inception, the company prides themselves on ingenuity and value and is recognized as one of the most iconic American brands.

Campaign

In 2013, under the direction of a new CMO, Chevrolet launched a campaign called “Find New Roads.” The campaign was intended to bring consistency to an advertising strategy that had seen a lot of variation in previous years. It also was loaded with far more emotion than previous campaigns. The campaign was so successful that brand executives decided to build upon it with a new campaign, which emerged in mid-2014 titled “The New Us”.

Chevrolet's new campaign "celebrat[ed] American diversity" while advertising the company's new 2014 vehicles, including the Traverse, Cruze, and Equinox (Socarides, 2014). It was created around the idea that Americans today are creating new ways of doing things. The campaign's feature commercial was titled "The New" and highlighted an assortment of 12 different families, seven of which included LGBT parents or single fathers, a first for Chevy, according to Forbes. The 30-second spot premiered during the opening ceremony of the Sochi Winter Olympics on NBC.

Chevrolet's decision to launch during the opening ceremony was groundbreaking because it was the first time that LGBT families had ever been shown in advertising during the Olympics (A Winter Olympics, 2014). However, the timing was perfectly in step with social chatter surrounding the Olympic events. The Games were hosted in Russia, which quickly became one of the most publicly anti-gay countries in the world after passing legislation in 2013 that "banned the dissemination of 'propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations'" (Friedman, 2014). The country's stance on the matter made headlines during a time when other parts of the world were making changes in the opposite direction. In the months leading up to the Games, gay rights activists aggressively raised awareness around the discrimination and protested against the Russian government. While Chevrolet never released any public statements regarding the insights and conversations that went into the creation of their inclusive campaign, it is likely that it was strongly impacted by the amount of attention that the LGBT community was receiving and creating during the time.

Every family that appeared in "The New" was a real American family and each scene showed the families in their natural settings, from a simple pose in the living room

to doodling with chalk in the driveway. A voiceover by actor John Cusack played over each clip throughout the video: “They are the ones we trust with our most secret secrets, who are always there when we need them. They are family. And while what it means to be a family hasn't change, what family looks like has. This is the new us. Chevrolet Traverse.”

“The New” video was one of eight commercials that aired in 500 slots as part of the campaign throughout the 17 days of the Olympics (Wayland, 2014). Four of these eight commercials feature gay families in some way (Turkus, 2014). The campaign was shared on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #TheNew and consumers were encouraged to share what “the new” meant to them. All of the advertisements were also posted on Chevrolet’s YouTube channel.

Management Support

Chevrolet’s inclusive ads align with their parent company’s core values. According to General Motor’s corporate site, “diversity is critical” and the company places a large emphasis on creating a diverse and inclusive environment. There is a page on the website solely dedicated to diversity which includes statements such as, “we live and breathe in a world of diversity,” and “by generating a culture of inclusion, not only is GM making our customers happy, but our employees happy, too” (About GM, 2015).

Chief Marketing Officer for GM, Tim Mahoney, served to represent the brand during the launch of the campaign. Mahoney characterized “The New” as “true, honest and optimistic,” adding that it gave “a sense of what Chevrolet is about” (Wayland, 2014). “We’re really striving to be as authentic as we can,” said Mahoney (Wayland, 2014).

While Mahoney was very vocal about the campaign prior to launch and in the campaign's early stages, his statements became fewer and further between as "The New Us" became more controversial. When inquired to comment on the Russian LGBT laws after the launch of the commercial, Chevy denied and instead released a statement saying "these ads ... are not intended as any political commentary" (A Winter Olympics, 2014). The brand also declined to provide comments for various news articles. However, despite the fact that Chevrolet failed to make a more bold statement on behalf of the campaign's controversial nature, some marketing experts believe that they made a bold statement without having to say anything. As the old adage goes, "actions speak louder than words," and the campaign made a clear statement about the company's beliefs about equality and inclusion. Allen Adamson, an executive at a New York branding firm, remarked that the campaign was "a very clear statement of what... Chevy stands for" (A Winter Olympics, 2014).

Consumer Response

Marketing experts saw the ad as a huge breakthrough for the advancement of the LGBT community, describing the campaign as "monumental", a "high profile move", and a "very big statement" from Chevrolet (Halpert, 2014). Many consumers mirrored similar sentiments on social media. Hundreds of comments on Chevy's Facebook posts during the campaign include thanks and praise for acknowledging diverse families.

GLAAD (formerly Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), an LGBT rights advocacy organization, was one of many groups to gratefully recognize Chevrolet's efforts to promote inclusivity. According to the organization's website, their work is dedicated to "Leading the conversation. Shaping the media narrative. Changing

the culture,” in order to benefit the LGBT community (About GLAAD). In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, GLAAD President and CEO said, “Chevrolet has nailed it with ads that truly reflect the fabric of our nation, which today includes gay and lesbian families” (Emery, 2014).

However, it was inevitable that the campaign would incite controversy. One of the most vocal opposition groups was the American Family Association, who published a press release criticizing Chevrolet for mocking “God’s plan for marriage and family” (Hart, 2014). AFA told members to convey their upset on Facebook and Twitter, and according to Chevy’s social media pages, they did. Chevrolet suffered “a barrage of critical messages on Facebook and Twitter from viewers decrying what they saw as the brand’s support for gay marriage as a political cause” (Halpert, 2014). The messages included disparaging remarks and vows to boycott Chevy products such as “disgusting move Chevy,” (Romeyn, 2014) and “I don’t want my money going towards any more anti traditional marriage commercials” (Goins, 2014). One positive outcome of the hateful comments was the creation of debate and conversation among consumers online, which proved the brand’s true supporters, who rose to defend Chevy against vicious retorts.

Campaign Effectiveness

Chevrolet’s original Facebook post of the video received over 1.62k shares and 7.77k likes. The YouTube video received over 1.37 million views and was recognized by AdWeek as one of the top 10 advertisements of the 2014 Olympics (Heine, 2014b).

According to BrandIndex, “net positive sentiment toward Chevy increased one point., among the general viewership” (Halpert, 2014). For the LGBT population, sentiment more than doubled and purchase consideration skyrocketed. The Advertising

Benchmark Index reported that “a disproportionately high number of people” said they would recommend Chevy to friends and family (Zmuda, 2014, 3). However, although sentiment towards the brand increased, it did not translate into higher sales. While consumers, particularly Millennials, sided with a brand on social views, few actually supported the brand with their pocketbook (Zmuda, 2014). Ultimately, the campaign polarized consumers to take a side of the debate and split Chevy’s market into those who supported the brand and those who opposed it.

It is interesting to note that Chevrolet has since removed all of the campaign’s advertisements from YouTube. Today, only two of the eight commercials can be found online through low-profile news sources. We have yet to see Chevy release any additional advertisements with inclusive messaging to the same extent. In March of 2014, GM’s CMO Tim Mahoney was quoted on a promise to continue executing inclusive ads: Chevrolet has “opened the door now. We have to continue to execute on it. New work has to follow this work. Otherwise it’s like, ‘Oh, they tried that’” (Zmuda, 2014, 6). As of now we are all still waiting for those ads, and the brand, which was originally admired as a trailblazer in inclusive advertising is quickly falling through the ranks.

DISCUSSION

The table below outlines the main takeaways from each campaign.

Brand	Conclusion
Honey Maid	Honey Maid spearheaded the movement into inclusive advertising. The brand's efforts were bold and executed with confidence, which garnered a vast group of supporters and unparalleled media attention. The consistency of their message of inclusivity has transformed Honey Maid from a cracker people love to a brand people love.
Dove	Dove Men+Care both continued and added to Dove's reputable history of successful advertising campaigns with their revolutionary redefinition of masculinity and fatherhood. The decision to air during events such as Father's Day and the Super Bowl opened the campaign up to high levels of exposure and earned media. Social media efforts helped the campaign's video to go viral and earn an impressive number of impressions. The brand's extensive research allowed them to accurately and effectively communicate with their target audience.
Chevrolet	Chevrolet made a bold statement in airing their campaign during the Sochi Olympics. The campaign received high levels of positive responses, but among Chevy's existing consumer base, attitudes were mixed. Based on the fact that the campaign's level of inclusiveness was not maintained in subsequent advertisements, and that the campaign was removed from the Internet, it is implied that it was not as successful as Chevy had hoped.

A comparative review of these three campaigns reveals several common themes.

These themes, discussed below, are arguably what made the campaigns noteworthy.

Moments/ Messages of Love

The first and perhaps most important theme of the ads was that they all communicate moments and messages of love. Love is an emotion that all modern families feel, regardless of their makeup. It is a common value that transcends all boundaries, from geographic to religious, and helps to bring a diverse market together. Direct communications with non-traditional families may be easily construed as alienating, but when the message triggers an emotion that everyone can relate to it helps

to break down the barriers between market segments and allows marketers to reach a larger consumer audience.

Real Families

All of the campaigns in this study featured real families and captured real moments of these families interacting in their personal environments. This technique allows consumers to relate to the brand and perceive the message as more honest, authentic, and meaningful. The families casted in the campaigns weren't special, famous, or pitied. They were totally normal, which is what makes them compelling in an advertising setting. The realness also shows that the brand cares about the average person, and consumers are more inclined to be brand loyal to companies that notice them. Additionally, casting celebrities in an advertisement doesn't come cheap, and finding one that is willing to be the face of a controversial message isn't always easy. Using people that are neither celebrities nor actors presents fewer financial and legal challenges.

Brand & Message Connection

Finally, the brands I studied found a way to connect their brand or product with the message they were communicating. One reappearing complaint from consumers was that brands' sole focus should be on selling a product, not a belief. However, when a brand is able to make a relevant connection with that belief the message resonates better with consumers and appears less forced. Honey Maid and Chevrolet did this most effectively. Honey Maid connected their brand to their message of "celebrating the diversity of the modern family," by reminding consumers of their "long history and dedication to inclusiveness" despite the changes that the company itself has experienced over the years (Snyder, 2015).

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING MANAGERS

Based on the common themes and the overall effectiveness of each campaign, there are five main success factors that marketing managers must focus on in developing and implementing inclusive advertising.

Be Bold

If a brand makes the decision to target non-traditional families, and, more or less, choose a side on a social matter, it is important to go big or go home. Making a vague reference about a stay-at-home dad in a TV spot, or waving a rainbow flag during gay pride month may garner brief and increasingly fleeting recognition, but is no longer considered a plucky move. Consumers admire the boldness and integrity that it takes to make a splash in risky waters.

Advertising has historically followed change, not led it. However “the mentality of corporate America began to change” when corporations recognized the potential and power that resides within the growing population of non-traditional families (Solomon, 2014). Successful marketers have gone beyond the simple objective of solely selling the product and the product only. They are taking more and more interest into recognizing the values and interests of consumers on a more personal level, controversial as it may be. This is what made the brands in this study receive the recognition they did.

Know Your Audience

It is absolutely imperative to know who you are talking to. Dove spent the time and resources necessary to truly understand the concerns and frustrations of their audience, and then directly addressed them. Chevy, on the other hand, had a far weaker understanding of the core values of their customers and ended up missing the mark.

While it is logical to advertise a brand selling a family car as one that accommodates all types of families, it is important to also recognize the families that are current customers. Chevrolet ran “The New Us” campaign in an attempt to appeal to new market segments and increase their consumer base, but in doing so they lost focus of retaining their current consumers.

Tell a Story

Telling stories within advertising is an age-old technique. However, in the case of targeting non-traditional families, it has proved to be imperative. Honey Maid’s campaign, arguably the most successful in this study, told consumers the stories of a handful of families. Each gave viewers a glimpse into these families’ lives, which were nothing short of ordinary. This sense of normality allowed viewers to connect with each story and put themselves in the shoes of these families experiencing obstacles in their lives—from raising a child single-handedly to facing the challenges of having two dads. Consumers want companies that genuinely support them and care about them. When messages are spread through the personal experiences of real people, the audience has a greater reason to listen and trust the brand communicating the message.

According to Forbes, there are five key tactics that make telling a story in your advertising successful: 1. Speak truthfully, 2. Infuse personalities into stories, 3. Create characters your audience will root for, 4. Include a beginning, middle, and end, 5. Don't give it all away (Gunelius, 2013). Additionally, all of the stories in this study were told using a documentary style of filming. This style alleviates the perception that the ad was staged or scripted, which adds another level of authenticity and honesty to the message.

With more and more brands creating additional content specifically for the Web, these “documericals” are able to tell a more complete story.

Stay True

Once a brand makes radical statements that reach the public it is important for the company to stand by them. If a company promotes itself as inclusive, it should abide by that value in every facet of operations and project an inclusive attitude in all arenas. It is nearly impossible to retract statements on social views, so rather than shrink under the weight of negative response, brands should rise up and be confident in their beliefs. While they risk losing some consumers, they create the opportunity to change some peoples’ minds and gain more fervent support from those who sided with them initially. The Honey Maid case presents a perfect example of this. They did not back down when they received harsh criticism, but responded with an even stronger message that helped the overall campaign receive even more attention, recognition, and praise.

Get Online

One of the best ways a company can get the most out of their advertising dollars is to make their messaging accessible in a way that compels consumers to spread the message for them, for free! By publishing content on social media platforms, brands create the opportunity for a campaign to go viral and exponentially boost awareness through preexisting networks of consumers.

Because conversation surrounding the social progression of fatherhood and LGBTs is so geographically spread, people take to online resources to voice their opinions and connect with like-minded individuals. Influencer groups, such as PFLAG and Dad 2.0 have a huge following online. Furthermore, the online presence of

Millennials alone should be enough to get a brand online. As of 2013 research, 81% of the generation are on Facebook, a number which has likely grown in recent years. When brands are present in the same arenas as their target market, they are able to get involved in the conversation and earn respect from consumers.

CONCLUSION

Today's modern family looks far different than it did when brands like Honey Maid, Dove, and Chevrolet stepped onto the consumer product scene. The increasing levels of diversity and acceptance in America have changed the social frontier, and brands must react to these changes if they want to remain relevant to consumers. The three brands discussed in this study are standout examples of the way marketing managers are embracing the new face of the average family in their advertising.

This study shows that when a brand publicly markets to non-traditional families they will likely be met with criticism, but an overwhelming majority of consumers will praise them for recognizing new family styles. However, while brand sentiment will likely increase, the company may not see an immediate impact on their bottom line. This study does not suggest a causal relationship between the implementation of the suggested success factors and increase in sales or profitability. However, it is important to note the long-term profitability potential of adopting more inclusive advertising practices. As noted earlier in this study, Millennials are the driving force behind the social changes that America is experiencing. While this generation's response to inclusive advertising is predominantly positive, their pockets are still shallow compared to older generations. In time, as Millennials become wealthier, they will likely spend money to support the companies that pioneered the movement into inclusive advertising.

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